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An Essay upon the state of Architecture and Antiquities, previous to the landing of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland. By L. C. Beaufort.

Read, Oct. 22, 1827.

ANCIENT Architecture, taking the expression in its most extended acceptation, opens a wide field for investigation, carrying us back to the rude monuments of early ages; monuments which prevail to a wonderful extent, throughout all parts of the world, and yet bearing such an extraordinary identity of character, as marks that character to have every where arisen from the same superstition. For these relics of times long since gone by, fragments, which Lord Bacon calls, "the wrecks of history," all bear a religious character, and point out both the worship and the country from whence that religion sprung.

That both were oriental is declared by tradition, and confirmed by history, sacred and profane.

From the East, the early histories of Ireland deduce her first inhabitants; while the Saxon Chronicle explicitly asserts that Britain was peopled from Armenia. And these statements have been so strongly corroborated by the researches into Indian and Persian history, which have been prosecuted by Sir William Jones and other learned Orientalists, as to clearly shew that these claims are not the mere fables of bardic legend, but that however disfigured and confused, they rest upon a solid basis of history. Hence an investigation of the early architecture of Ireland, necessarily involves some degree of enquiry into the origin of her population, her manners, and her customs.

Whether Britain was the earliest peopled, and soon afterwards colonized Ireland, or whether both islands were taken possession of about the same period by different parties of the great nation of wandering adventurers, denominated Scythians, will, it is probable, never be distinctly known; but it is certain that the same race which inhabited Ireland, did also occupy a large part of Britain: this is evinced by the numberless names of places in the south and west of that country, which according to the great Welsh antiquaries, Llwyd and Roberts, are Irish; and which are to be found in that language, whilst they cannot be explained by the Welsh or Celtic, or any of its branches.

The Celts or Cumri, appear to have conquered the first Britons or Loegrians, as Roberts calls them, and to have driven them out of the country, at which time, as we learn from both Welsh and Irish history, they took refuge with their kindred nation in Ireland. Hence the resemblance already adverted to, between the names in south-western England, in Wales, and in Ireland, notwithstanding the dissimilarity of the existing languages.

Our eastern ancestors appear to have received at several periods, colonies of Colchian-Scythians, not only from Spain, where they had early been established in the province of the Turdetani, and famed for their progress in the arts; but even directly from the still more distant regions of Asia. Such are the pretensions of our oldest histories, and they are countenanced as well by the character both of the fables, and the authentic facts recorded in those histories, as by the language, the arts, and the customs of the country.

I. By the fables and the facts of Irish history—both of which are most curiously blended with circumstances recorded in that of Persia. Now the earliest history of every nation is the history of the parent country brought with them by the colonists, and trans-

ferred to the new country, which in the progress of time gradually becomes the imaginary seat of the various events originally recorded. This is so plainly the case with regard to much of the Irish history, as to excite a strong persuasion that the exact time of the peopling of Ireland might be satisfactorily made out, by ascertaining the period at which the Irish histories cease to be applicable to Persia and Spain, and become appropriate only to Ireland.

Nor could these histories have been invented in support of the claim to Median descent, because the Irish books and MS. in which they are found, were written long before the annals of Iran had been made known to these countries through modern research. How indeed can the close resemblance between many of the Eastern and Irish legends, that for instance, of the Persian hero Rustam and his son Sohraùb, to the story of the Irish Conloch and his valiant father Cucullin*—or the exact similitude which the account Herodotus† gives of the Macedonian king Amyntas and Darius the Persian, bears to the Irish history of the destruction of Turgesius the Dane—be accounted for otherwise than by the chronicles and legends of the parent state having been transported to the colony, and there located by the adaptation of names, times, and places. Had the events recorded been borrowed, would not a succinctly arranged history, free from the absurdities which now deform it, have been made out; but on the contrary there remains the same mixture of the fabulous and the marvellous, as is found in the early records of all ancient nations. Yet notwithstanding this quantity of fable and useless matter, and the discrepancies frequently observable in their accounts, there are some points on which all the Irish annalists and

* Transactions Royal Irish Academy.

† Tergos, ch. v.—Campion's Hist. Ireland, p. 73. Hib. Edit. 1809.—Warner's Albion's England, b. v. c. 26.

bards, whether contemporaries, or existing at very distant periods, perfectly agree;* and surely their consistency, both as regards these facts and in their representations of the manners and customs of the people, forms a powerful evidence of their truth; while the circumstances of these histories being in verse offers a strong proof of their antiquity.† It may be also observed, that had these records been in great measure gleaned from those of other countries, it must have been through the medium of Greek and Roman authors, and in that case it would have been scarcely possible, but that some tinge from the channel would remain. But it is a remarkable fact, that none of the writings of the Irish Fileas, or their successors, betray the smallest intimacy with these authors.‡

II. By the language—from its possessing many words agreeing with the ancient Persian and with the Sanscrit; and a very great number which have their roots in those tongues, most especially the terms of art—as all those belonging to the manufacture of linen—to astronomy—the names of measures—and the terms employed both in religion and government;§—all which words, though not to be traced in the Celtic or its derivatives, are to be found in the eastern tongue.¶

* O'Connor's Dissert, Preface, p. v.

† Bishop Hutchinson's Defence of the Ancient Hist. of Ireland, p. 86.

‡ O'Connor's Dissert. p. 198.

§ Ghebelin asks how the Irish can be supposed to have borrowed terms from the Latin, when all these terms are found in their ancient laws? And Bailey is of opinion that, any science must have originated with that people in whose language the technical terms are expressed.

¶ Corroborative of these opinions, is the discovery lately made by a scientific gentleman residing at Bristol, of the remarkable circumstance, that most of the provincial names of *indigenous* plants in that part of the kingdom are of Hebrew origin. (Class. Jour. No. LXI. p. 122.)

In the honoured Irish shamrock, we have a curious coincidence, the trefoil plant (shamroc

This view is remarkably supported by the circumstance that Sir William Temple, who wrote before Oriental learning had thrown light on this subject, declared that there was no trace by which to seek out the original of this language, for, that there was none on the continent of Europe to which it had any affinity.*

III. By the Arts.—As that of the manufacture of linen, which was scarcely known in other parts of Europe at a time when it was practised from one end of Ireland to the other; and linen formed, at that time, one of the principal articles of dress, composing a large part of the ample robe and the eastern turban of the Irish. So it is described by Speed in his *Itinerary*, as still continuing in his day.† And it is worthy of remark, that the early knowledge and practice of this manufacture, is a strong evidence of the oriental origin of the Irish, since the Colchian Scythians,‡ from whom they claim

and shamrakh in Arabic) having been held sacred in Iran, and considered emblematical of the Persian Triad. (Collect. v. 118.)

This recalls the well known legend of St. Patrick's having illustrated the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, by the three-lobed shamrock leaf.

It is remarkable also, that in the *Life of St. Patrick*, in the *Book of Armagh*, a manuscript, confessedly of great antiquity, *Satrape* and *Magi*, are the titles employed to designate the king's courtiers.

And that in the *Collection of Tirechan*, contained in the same ancient book, the word *Sidē* (gods of the earth, or phantoms) is that used by the king's daughters in their address to Patrick and his companion. (Betham's *Antiq. Res.* pp. 314, 368.)

In India *Sidha*, expressed those who after death have become gods. (Buchanan's *Journey in Mysore*, v. III. p. 82.)

In modern Irish the words *Sigh* and *Sighidh*, mean *spirit*, *goblin*.

* Hutchinson's *Defence*, p. 40.

† See also *Spencer's View*, p. 114, Hibernian Press Edit. *Collect. de Rebus Hib.* VI. p. 70.

‡ Among the Abassian and Tscherkessian tribes, the inhabitants of the Caucasian or Colchian region, there being no metallic currency, *linen* forms the medium of barter; it is sized, calendered, and made up in rolls, each containing the quantity requisite for a shirt: these rolls are called *Boccassines*. See Klaproth's *Travels in the Caucasus*, p. 334. "

their descent, were remarkable for it in the oldest recorded times ; and also, that in every country where, in the course of their wanderings and their conquests these warlike Scythians obtained a footing, there, they introduced the culture of flax, and the manufacture of linen. So remarkable were they for this art, that Herodotus* mentions it as a national characteristic, and one by which their kindred nations may be traced.

The art of working metals, may also be named as one in common use in Ireland, before it was practised by the neighbouring western nations. This is proved by the great number of metal antiques, chiefly golden, and of excellent workmanship, which have been found in this country, many of them underneath, or contained within the most ancient monuments, the majority of which being relics of pagan superstition, must be of a date previous to the introduction of Christianity.

IV. By customs.—For even yet are some retained which derive their origin from the ancient worship of the country, and its sacred festivals ;—one or two of these it is sufficient to mention.

The fires of Baal, or Bel, lighted upon a particular day in every district in Ireland, and known by the name of the Baal-tyne or Bel-tien.† These fires are supposed to be possessed of many virtues, those especially of purifying from past transgressions, and preserving from future harm. The writer has more than once been a personal witness of the ceremony of driving the cattle of a certain village through the blazing fire ; whilst the young people and children followed, and each seizing a lighted brand, formed a sort of irregular winding dance, waving the flaming torches over their

* In Euterpe, §

† Toland's Letters on the Druids, p. 100, Edit. 1747.

heads, and shouting in a sort of rude chorus. Can there be a doubt as to the source of this custom ?

The festival of All-hallow Eve, is observed by the Scotch and Irish, while it is but little known in England. This day was one of the four great festivals which were observed in Ireland. It was anciently dedicated to Sahn or Sahman, one of the sacred names of the sun,* when offerings were made of fruit, corn, and cakes of fine flour, spotted with poppy and carraway seeds, and stained with saffron.† Hence the origin of the cake still peculiar to Ireland, vulgarly called the Barn-break, rightly the *Bairin-Breac*,‡ the spotted cake or bread, which it is even now in many country parts customary for bakers to send at Hollandtide as presents to their customers.

To this ancient worship of Baal the sun, and of fire, the emblem of the sun, may be traced the names of the most ancient erections, which in almost every case where the old name has been preserved, allude to the sun either directly, or by the name of Baal or Bel ;—

* In the Indian account of the Bahman Avatar, it is recorded that Bali instituted the feasts of the Solstitial fires; and it appears that these feasts, particularly that of the first of November, are even at this day celebrated throughout the peninsula with great splendor. They light vast fires, and illuminate their houses with innumerable lamps in honour of Baal-Samin, the Lord of Heaven. (Sonnerat i. p. 140—and Maurice Auct. Hist. Hindostan, vol. ii. p. 87 and 89.)

† Sonnerat mentions that at the great feast of Fire, held annually in India, all the votaries stain their bodies with *saffron*. [Vol. i. p. 154.]

The *poppy* is cultivated in Mysore and Malabar, not for opium, but for seed, which they put into cakes. [Buchanan's Journey, I. 295. III. 444.]

In Letters from the Caucasus, (p. 125—6) we are told, that in Persia, poppy seed is constantly put into cakes and bread, and that finer saffron is grown in Iran than can be elsewhere obtained. Saffron is classed with wine and song, as equally belonging to the banquet, in the ancient Irish poems of Megnus the Great.—Brooke's Irish Reliques, p. 62.)

‡ Ledwich and Vallancey, Collect. Reb. Hib. VII. 291, and III. 435.

The Irish words are Bairin, a cake—Breac, speckled.—O'Reilly D.] Breac, in Gaelic—partly coloured. [Macpherson's Essays, 115.]

so in Cairn Grainey, the Heap of the Sun, in the county of Antrim;—in Clare, on Mount Callen, Altoir na Greine, the Altar of the Sun;—and near Killala is a ruin, in very good preservation, called Baal-tien, the House of Baal. From the names of the numberless monuments of this nature, the legends attached to them, and the reverence with which they are still regarded by the people, especially in the western and southern parts of the island, where the ancient race has been the least intermixed with that of their invaders, it appears that this worship was retained here to a later period than in the sister kingdom; it may be also inferred from some differences in the remains of antiquity, that in times subsequent to those, when the rude altar was raised in both islands, some change took place in Ireland in the manner of the worship, and a consequent alteration in the religious structures.

The purpose of these detailed remarks is to point out the eastern origin of the Irish, and their eastern worship, which, in conjunction with these reflections, will be found to throw useful light upon much of the remains of primitive Irish architecture.

Of these the greater part bear a religious character; and, as in all other nations, are the only fabrics of the early ages which have come down to our time. Such are the crom-leac, the cairn, the circle of upright stones, the pillar-stone, and the mount. To these succeed the round tower; a description of edifice so rare in other countries as to be very nearly peculiar to Ireland; and also the small stone-roofed buildings, of which a few still remain. These all belong to ancient Erin, in ages previous to those successive invasions, whose rapine and conquests had nearly swept away her early civilization.

That she had advanced in civilization and the arts of life, is evidenced by a variety of circumstances; her extended husbandry is

marked by traces of the plough underneath deep bogs, which have been cut away, and on many mountains which could not now be brought into tillage without an immense expence of labour and money.* Bede mentions the salubrious climate, the abundance of fowl, honey and milk, and the cultivation of the vine.† Agriculture, it is plain, must have been the common practice of the country, and carried on largely, since Ireland was able to export great quantities of corn to England,‡ in the times immediately succeeding the ages of Danish devastation, and during the perpetual warfare and struggle with the Anglo-Saxons; her wealth indeed must have been very great, to have enabled her in 1229, only fifty-nine years after the invasion, to yield any revenue to the English monarchs, and to export corn, wine, and beer to England.§

That roads for the transport of her goods early existed, the remains still to be traced attest. These roads lead from the sea ports to the interior of the country; they were narrow, and formed of flat stones placed on edge, while at defiles and fords places of security were formed, where cars and goods were kept in safety during the night.¶ One of these roads crosses the island from Galway to Dublin; it was supported along the sides by walls, and at intervals was defended by strong holds. That this road was for the purpose of facilitating trade to Dublin, whence the *Diablintae*

* Stewart's Hist. Armagh, p. 607.—O'Connor's Dissert. p. 112.—Hamilton's Letters on Antrim, p. 40.

† Eccles. Hist. B. I. c. i. It is remarkable, that there are in the Irish language terms for the grape, the vine, the vineyard, and the wine-press, (Hist. Armagh, 599.) either the vine was sufficiently cultivated to give rise to these words in the language, or they previously belonged to it in another country where the vine was well known.

‡ Betham's Antiqua. Res. part 1. p. 5.

§ Ibid.

¶ Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, Introd. lxxxvii. And an ancient Irish MS. there quoted.

carried on commerce with the inhabitants of North Wales, has been suggested by an author who is not very favourable to the idea of the early civilization of Ireland;* and the suggestion is strongly supported by the circumstance, that an ancient road in England, which reached from Sandwich to Caernarvon, was called by the Romans Guetheling or Watling Street. Now this name, in this as in other instances, was derived from that of the people towards whom it was directed; and these were the Guetheli or Gatheli of Ireland.—Hence Dr. Whitaker argues that the ancient Britons had roads and commercial intercourse before the settling of the Romans, who, being ignorant of the Guetheli, must have adopted the name which they found in common use among the British.†

Foreign commerce too, appears to have been early pursued, since Tacitus distinctly says that the “ports and landing places of Hibernia were better known than those of Britain, through the frequency of commerce and merchants.”‡ The likelihood of this trade having extended chiefly eastwards, is very great; since Ireland is mentioned in so distinct a manner by some of the oldest Greek authors,§ as scarcely to admit a doubt of her having been well known to the navigators of those times, the Phenicians, who were the carriers and merchants of the world—and through them to the Greeks.¶ What could the Phenicians resort here for, but

* Wood on the Primitive Inhabitants of Ireland, p. 96—99.

† Whitaker's History of Manchester, I. p. 68.

‡ Vitae Agricola, C. 24.

§ Orpheus, Homer, Plutarch, Strabo, Aristotle: see at large in Sir E. Parson's Defence of the Ancient History of Ireland, pp. 80, 95, 97, 119. By Dio. Sic. see Phil. Survey of the South of Ireland, p. 448.

¶ Ibid. p. 112.

for purposes of trade;* and that trade is explained to have consisted in metals furnished by Ireland. There cannot exist a question that mines were worked, and to a great extent, in this island in the earliest times, because not only ancient shafts and galleries have been traced, but tools of the most antique fashion, of stone, and of the mixed metal of which the weapons called celts are made, have been found, together with candles with linen wicks.

The probability is, that these exports were repaid by commodities from the East;† and this probability is curiously corroborated by the Hervarrar Saga, a book in old Icelandic, which relating the combat of Hialmar and Odder, with Argantys and his eleven brothers, mentions that Odder had procured from Ireland a silk garment impenetrable to any weapon: this battle took place, according to the historian Suhm, A. D. 410.‡ Now unless Ireland traded with or kept up an intercourse with the east, whence could she have obtained articles of silken manufacture to dispose of at a time when it was one of the most expensive rarities on the continent?

This luxury, it is evident, was one indulged in by the Irish, and continued to be so until 1537, when silk embroidered vests and

* Ibid. 103.—————No pilots' aid the Phenician vessels need;
Themselves instinct with sense securely speed;
To fertile realms and distant climates go,
And where each realm and city lies they know.

Odyss. lib. viii.

† The poem of Magnus the Great speaks of "precious stones from the country of the east." Brooke's Irish Reliques, p. 83.

The Irish poets speak of silken standards; and the Gall-greina, or standard of the Feinian heroes, was a *blazing sun*, radiant with the gems of the east.—Ibid. p. 63 and 83.

Gal-battle—Gal-greina, possibly the sun of battle—as Gal-trumpa, the trumpet of battle.—Galla is brightness; Gal-greina, the brightness of the sun.

‡ Herbert on Icelandic Poetry, I. pp. 74, 93.

kirtles were prohibited by act of parliament. But so wedded to the use of silk were the “naked Irishry,” as the calumnious Moryson unblushingly calls them, that in 1596 Spencer enumerates silken fillets as one of the common parts of dress;* and at that time silk was a very costly article.

Woollens of fine fabrick, it has been proved, were largely exported to Italy, where they were highly prized for their excellence, so early as before 1357,† when the manufacture of fine goods was only introducing into England by Edward III. Therefore this art was not acquired from their English masters; but there is evidence to prove that trade in this commodity was in full vigour at a still earlier period, when the “very ancient” MS., quoted in the *Della Crusca Dictionary*, was written, at which time Irish serge appears to have been much used by the luxurious ladies of Florence.‡

Woollen goods were imported from Ireland into England in 1216,§ only forty-six years after the first Anglo-Norman invasion. And still farther back, Donat, Bishop of Fiesole in Italy, describes Ireland in 802 as being a country “rich in garments and clothing.”¶ Manufactures and commerce are both of slow growth,

* Spencer's View, p. 114, Edit. Dub.

† Transactions R. I. A. I. 20.

§ Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 22.—England continued to import woollens both from Ireland and the Hans towns, down to Elizabeth's reign; and Ireland continued to manufacture and export woollen of various fabrics until Lord Stafford prohibited the practice. The long wool of Ireland was highly prized by the French, and employed in their manufacture of fine cloth.—Phil. Survey of the South of Ireland, 193.

¶ Stewart's Hist. of Armagh, 146—

Far westward lies an Isle of ancient fame,
By nature bless'd, and Scotia is her name;
An island rich—exhaustless is her store
Of veiny silver, and of golden ore;

requiring much time to bring them to perfection, and are both unlikely to spring up in times of warfare and national distress; hence it may not unreasonably be concluded that they had arisen in earlier and more peaceful times, and were the remnants of that commerce and those arts derived from eastern ancestors. For, as the colonists brought with them the mode of manufacturing linen, it may, without any great stretch of probability, be concluded, that the Irish serge, which Spencer,* puts on a level with silk, was somewhat of the soft twilled texture of those fine woollen stuffs which are manufactured, and form great part of the dress of the upper classes throughout Iran, and even to the shores of the Bosphorus—most of the ermin lined pelisses of the Turks being composed of it.

The early learning of Ireland cannot be denied; since, having survived the era of destruction and spoliation, there are now in existence many of her works, which were written when Europe was immersed in darkness, and before the Saxons had acquired an alphabet; these were a rude unlettered people when they invaded England, and they are said by Camden to have borrowed their alphabet from the Irish,† there being between the two only a few variations, merely enough to establish a distinct dialect.‡ There not being in Germany, nor on any part of the

Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow,
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow;
Her waving furrows float with bearded corn,
And arms and arts her envied sons adorn.

Descrip. of Ireland by St. Donatus, Bishop of Etruria.

* Fairie Queen, B. III.

† Camden's Ireland, p. 68.—Spencer's View, p. 65.—Sir William Temple and Nicholson's Irish Library, Pref. 12.

‡ Dr. Chas. O'Connor on Ancient Alphabets

continent of Europe, a character at all resembling that of the Irish,* greatly supports the claim to a peculiar alphabet having been brought by the first colonists into Ireland ; and this claim is further strengthened by Strabo's evidence, that in his time letters were universally known throughout Spain, though he names the Turdetani as the most learned people of the Spanish peninsula,† being possessed of ancient histories and laws written in verse, and paying particular attention to the preservation of their public records.

These Turdetani were a Phenician colony, and brought with them the letters and the customs of the parent state, which, as Josephus relates, took every precaution for the sacred preservation of its history.‡ Was it from Strabo or Josephus, that in the dark ages the annalists and bards of Ireland, adopted and transferred to Ireland these ideas of public records and public care of them? Were they not rather brought along with letters, customs, and arts, by the Milesians, the descendants of these very Turdetani? Can the antiquity of the assertion of these claims, the early acquaintance with letters, and the remarkable differences which existed between the customs of the Irish, and of the surrounding nations, be in any other way rationally accounted for?

Letters, learning, and civilization, could not have been introduced by our early Christian teachers, for there was not time sufficient for the progress made ; they must have found them to a certain degree established in the country, and upon them have engrafted the Christian faith, which quickly spread and flourished in a soil so

* Hutchinson's defence, 40—Rowland's Mon. Ant.—Camden's Ireland—Johnson's History of the English Language—Hist. Armagh, p. 607. Leibnitz in Phil. Survey of the South of Ireland, p. 431.

† Littleton Hist. Hen. II. Vol. iii. p. 12. or Strabo. lib. III. p. 204, Amstelod.

‡ Sir L. Parson's Defence of Irish Hist. 182.

congenial; and from ecclesiastical historians it appears that invariably the progress of Christianity has been rapid in proportion to the previous degree of mental cultivation.*

Nor does the circumstance that no remains of dwelling houses are found in existence at all warrant the hasty conclusion, that this was a nation of savages, dwelling only in caves, dens, and forests, since a similar inference might on the same grounds apply to Assyria, Egypt, Persia, and Palestine. No houses, not even a palace of ancient times remains in those countries, the cradles of the arts; and for the same reason—they were not built of durable materials; there, as with us, no buildings have survived the wreck of time but those of a religious character.

When the ancient inhabitants settled in Ireland they most probably built their houses in the manner to which they had been accustomed—that which, to the present day, continues in the unchanging east.

Over the greater part of India, in Mesopotamia, and among the tribes dwelling in the valleys of the Caucasus, the houses are built of closely woven wicker-work, plastered within and without with mud, tempered into an adhesive mortar. Of such materials Giraldus Cambrensis tells us, the palace built at Dublin by King Henry II. was constructed, as he says, “according to the fashion of the country,” a fashion followed probably because there was not time for any more solid erection;† neither could this mode be very surprising to the British, as it was also employed in England, and continued to be in use to a late period.

Houses built entirely of tempered mud are extremely common in

* O'Connor's Letters on Ireland in Collect. Reb. Hib. iii. p. 227.

† Littleton's Hist. Hen. II. v. III. p. 88.

several parts of India and Caubul; and throughout Persia the dwellings of the poorer classes are of mud. These bear so great a resemblance to the Irish cabin, that it has been remarked by more than one modern traveller. Indeed in the western side of the Indian peninsula, in Persia and Caucasus, not only houses but palaces two stories high, and even fortresses, are built with mud walls alone: neither stone, brick, nor timber being employed to strengthen them. In Mysore the art of making mud walls is carried to such perfection, that many of the mud-wall houses are flat-roofed and terrassed.* Some habitations were probably constructed of wood, as were those of England at that time; barons only, and chieftains, being possessed of stone-built mansions. And perhaps a part of the population, particularly the tribes of Celtic race, might live under spreading trees in the forests, as described to have been their practice in later times by Spencer; in a manner much resembling that which Bruce ascribes to the African Galla, who pass the dry season in the forests with which their country abounds; each family chooses a spreading tree, of which they plash together the outer bending branches, fastening their ends to the ground: these branches they cover with the skins of beasts. Within these walls of living wicker-work all the small twigs are cut away, so that a large space is left free in this vegetable tent, in which the tree stem appears like the central pillar.†

In any or all of these cases, for all may have existed simultaneously, no remains of dwelling houses could have come down to modern times.

* Buchanan's Journey through Mysore, I. p. 33.

† Bruce's Travels, IV. p. 29, Edit. 1805.

Of the ancient monuments the Crom-leac may be placed the first, since if not the very oldest, it appears coeval with the cairn, the circle of stones, and the pillar-stone. From the direction given by Moses* to the Israelites, before they entered the land of Canaan, not to use hewn stone, or employ a tool in preparing the stones for building an altar to the Lord, the Crom-leac might reasonably be considered as a transcript of the ancient patriarchal altar, as recorded in holy writ, and therefore the earliest description of religious structure; from that Mosaic injunction, given very possibly in consequence of the Egyptian practice of ornamenting their temples and altars with idolatrous carvings, the custom of using rough stones undefiled by the work of man, may also be deduced. And this idea of their patriarchal origin is strengthened by the circumstance of the Rock-altar or Crom-leac being found throughout Asia, where it is universally sacred to Budh. It is often emphatically styled the altar of blood.†

The name Crom-leac, is compounded of Crom, which signifies God, Fate, or Providence; and leac, a stone, literally the stone or altar of God: what god they were dedicated to sufficiently appears from the local names retained by so many of these altars. Cromadh‡ means bowing, or bending, or crooked, whence it has been supposed by some that the name was derived, because the devotee was supposed to bow or bend in devotion, or because it was the bowing sloping stone, the Crom-leac being invariably constructed with a steep inclination, most usually from north to south, but also not unfrequently from east to west. Other anti-

* Exod. xx. 25.

† Maurice, *Ancient Hist. Hindost.* II. p. 481.

‡ O'Reilly and O'Brien, *Dicts.*

quaries* have suggested that this term might be traced to the Hebrew, chemar-luach, a stone of burning† or sacrifice; but the first derivation appears the most reasonable, and is supported by the circumstance of there having been priests of Crom, called Crom-thear.‡

There seems not to have been any particular nicety, as to the situation in which Crom-leacs were placed. Some are found in valleys, some on the sides of hills, and a large proportion of them on the tops of mountains, of lofty hills, and of artificial mounts and cairns. They often stand single, but in many instances in connection with circles of stones, pillar-stones, caves, and mounds; sometimes one, sometimes more of these monuments accompanying the Crom-leac, and in a few cases it is united with nearly all of them.

These altars vary very much in size, and of course in form, as that depends upon the natural shape of the stones; in most instances they consist of three upright supporters, two at the lower, and one at the upper end, upon which the altar stone was balanced; but there are a few with only two supporters, upon which is placed horizontally the covering stone. Underneath the sloping covering stone, and between the uprights a hollow is usually found, which is thought to have been for the purpose of facilitating the passage of cattle and children under the sacred fire, a practice which seems to be alluded to in Scripture when the Israelites are reproached

* Rowland Mona Antiqua, p. 47.—Smith's Hist. Co. Cork, I. p. 180.

† Sir William Ousely describes an immense Crom-leac formed apparently of artificial stone, fifty feet long and thirteen high, under which there is a narrow passage about four feet in height. This stone is flat on the top like an altar. The peasants call it the "Mansion of the fire-worshippers." Travels in the East, II. 105.

‡ O'Reilly's Dict.



Crom-leak,
With three Supports,
At Skibereen, Co. of Cork.

with passing their sons and daughters under the fires of Moloch—a name also given to the sun.

The Crom-leacs with only two supporters are now rarely met with, but a perfect one of these Trilithons stands at Kindrahad, county of Donegal.* At Slidery, near Dundrum, county of Down,† there is one of the three-pillared altars, the table stone of which is nearly circular. In the same county, near Drumgoolan, another, shaped like a coffin, and of uncommon regularity in the construction;‡ while at Castle Mary, county of Cork, a Cromleac is described by Dr. Smith,§ as having the remarkable appendage of a stone table for cutting up the victims. This altar bears the name of Carig-na-crioth, the sun's rock. These instances are given merely to shew the variety of form, and for that purpose are selected from the almost innumerable Crom-leacs which remain throughout the island.

Some also are found with four upright stones or pillars, two at each end. Of these it is sufficient to note one or two of the most remarkable. On the top of Craig's rock, parish of Finvoy, county of Antrim,¶ stands a Crom-leac, the two front pillars of which are four feet high and one asunder; the height of those at the back is seven feet six inches; underneath the stone, and between the uprights, is a small chamber, now much filled with stones, the entrance into which was between the two southern or front pillars;—at the farther or north end, this chamber opens into two small vaults, seven feet six inches long, by seven feet wide, and these have evidently

* Parish of Culduff, Shaw Mason's Parochial Surveys, II. p. 155.

† Dubardieu's Survey of Down, p. 272.—Harris's History of Down, p. 201.

‡ Dubardieu's Down, 272.

§ History of Cork, I. p. 140.

¶ Shaw Mason's Parochial Survey, I. 384.

been *arched* over: on the front side of this altar the covering stone overhangs the supporters three feet, and outside of this projection stand two narrow slabs of stone pitched on end—the whole is contained within a circle of stones, forty-five feet in diameter, surrounded by an outer earthen enclosure, within which mound a subterraneous passage seems to have been carried round the whole circumference.

This is a very perfect, and certainly a remarkable Crom-leac, united as it is with other remains deserving of particular observation; for here we have the altar placed upon an artificial elevation, surrounded by the sacred circle of stones, and combined with caves where the mysteries may have been performed, and from whence oracular responses may possibly have been delivered. The country people regard this spot with veneration, and have a tradition that in former times the table-stone could move.

At Fiddown, county of Kilkenny, stands an altar of about five feet elevation, placed upon a cairn raised upon a summit of Carick-na-Gaug-hill.* In this instance the Crom-leac and the cairn are united.

Sugar-loaf Hill, county of Waterford,† exhibits one of the largest of the Crom-leacs with four supporters; the covering-stone is of great size, and is raised twenty feet from the ground. Under this, but entirely detached from it, and equi-distant from the four uprights, stands a pillar-stone. Such combination of these different vestiges of paganism distinctly shew that they were employed in the ancient worship, and in simultaneous use; since, although seldom *all* combined, they appear to have been indifferently connected with the Crom-leac, and with each other.

* Parochial Surveys, I. p. 364.

† Ryland's History of Waterford, p. 263.



Baal Tien, The House of Baal,
Near Killala, Co. of Mayo.

Some Crom-leacs were of great size, and seem to have formed a sort of low temple.—Baal-tien, about three miles from the town of Killala, county of Mayo, appears to have been something of this kind. A rude pronaos, formed by four upright stones on each side, led to an altar, placed over a deep pit, at each end of which a great stone is fixed; upon these the large, now displaced table stone, was laid; the pit has perpendicular sides, and is so deep that it must have been very difficult for either human creature or four-footed beast to have got in or out of it, in order to pass under the fire. Possibly therefore, it may have been for the purpose of receiving the blood of the victims slaughtered upon the altar; such pits* were used by the Greeks and Romans when sacrificing to the infernal deities; and as the sun, the Sol Infernus of the winter half year, was in Egypt, according to Porphyry classed among the infernal deities, and worshipped under the name of Serapis; it is not impossible that at the winter festivals, this mode of sacrificing may have obtained in Ireland.

A larger Crom-leac temple remains on the hill of Garry-Duff, county of Kilkenny,† where there are sixteen stones placed in four rows; the two in the centre were each composed of five stones, the lines at four feet distance from each other; three stones formed each of the outer rows: these cells had formerly covering stones, and in the earth beneath burnt bones and ashes have been found; lower down, on the side of the hill, stands a tapering pillar stone, which is eleven feet high from the present surface of the ground.

Of the same species is that of Labacally, near Glanworth, county

* In Hebrew a *pit* with the sign of classification affixed, signifies fire-worship.—[Classical Jour. No. LVII. p. 88. note.] Among the ruins of the Temple of Serapis, at Puzzuoli, a deep square pit for receiving the sacrificial blood is always pointed out by the Ciceroni.

† Tighe's Survey of Kilkenny, p. 627.

of Cork,* called by the country people Grannies Bed, a corruption from Grian. The Phenicians worshipped Apollo by the name of Grian, and the epithet Gryneus is twice found in Virgil.† It has also been found in inscriptions both by Gunter and Muratori; and in Camden's *Lauden*, there is an inscription to Apolloni Granno.‡ Among the Caledonians also the sun was adored under the name of Grannius, evidently derived from the Gaelic, which precisely agrees with the Irish language in calling the sun Grian.§ Some years ago a stone bearing an inscription to Grannius was dug up between the Friths of Forth and Clyde, which proves that the sun by this appellation, was one of the deities of the Jarghail or western Caledonians.¶ It is also a fact worthy of note, that the great heath which separates Badenoch from Strathspey, where several stone circles still exist, is called by the country people *Slia-Ghrannus*, literally the heath of Grannius. While the whole district bears the name of *Grian-Tochd*, the country of Grian.** From the close connexion in language, customs, and political relation between the ancient Caledonians and the Irish, these circumstances are strong confirmations of the hypothesis that the idolatry of the sun was the leading religion of Ireland.

* Smith's History of Cork, II. p. 416.—Townsend's Survey of Cork, p. 113.

† *Æneid*, B. IV. l. 345.—*Sixth Eclogue*, l. 72.—The epithet Gryneus is usually derived from the name of a temple and town near Clazomena in *Æolia*, but it seems more probable that the temple received its name from the god, rather than the god from the temple.—*Philosophical Survey*, p. 230.

‡ *Bib. M. S. Stowensis*, I. pp. 49—7.

§ Macpherson's *Antiq. Scotland*, p. 287.—Mr. M. derives Grian from *Gre* or *Gne*, signifying the nature, and *thein* the oblique case of *tein*, fire.—In the Gaelic language when a consonant is placed before an *h*, the *h* is always silent, so that *Gre-thein*, must be pronounced *Gre-ein*—that is, the *essence* or *natural source of fire*.

¶ *Ibid.* 286.

** *Ibid.* 287.

This temple of Grian is composed of several covering stones of great size, one of them being seventeen feet long, by nine broad; these are supported by two ranges of upright stones, and underneath the whole is a vault, the entrance to which is closed by a very large stone. Here again may be observed in connexion with the Rock-altar, the small vault or cave, from whence responses might be given, as at Delphos, at Eleusis, at the Grotto of Tropho-nius, at the little Cella of the Cumean Sybil in Italy, and it is probable in other countries also.*

Isaiah† seems to allude to this practice in a verse, which in our translation is rendered seeking to “Wizards that mutter,” but in that of the Septuagint, “Seeking to Wizards speaking out of the earth.” And again, in our own version, “Thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.”‡ The following verse seems also to refer to oracles of this nature: “Thus saith the Lord that created the Heavens, I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place in the earth.”§

This altar, or tomb, or shrine, is surrounded at about fourteen feet distance from its centre by a circle of upright stones; and underneath it, as under many other Crom-leacs, have been found bones. In many instances, small earthen urns containing ashes have been dug up; thus uniting a sacred and a funereal character, a union which has been found to prevail throughout the ancient mysteries, as far as the initiated have ventured to reveal.¶ Where

* *Archeologia*, II. 361.

† *Isaiah* viii. 19.

‡ *Isaiah*, xxix. 4.

§ *Ibid.* xlv. 18, 19.

¶ *Faber on the Origin of Pagan Idolatry*; as shewn at large in the third volume.

the Crom-leac is connected with sepulchral remains, it is considered to have been erected in commemoration of, and at the obsequies of distinguished chieftains, and to have been used as an altar of oblation,* where perhaps sacrifice was afterwards offered to the manes of the deceased.

The same mysterious double character extended also to the *Cairn*, which is so frequently connected with the Crom-leac, and which has been found in the greater number of instances, among those that have been opened, to contain relics of the dead. . Of the Cairn there were two descriptions, the Taimh-leacht, or burying cairn, and the simple cairn, or high place made of stones piled into the shape of a lofty cone, flatted on the top.

The Taimh-leacht are usually raised over a Kiske, or Kist-van—more properly Ciske-Bhana,† that is literally the coffer of death: this is commonly formed of six stones exactly fitted to each other, but not fastened together, being a sort of rude sarcophagus ;—within this stood the urn, in some instances highly ornamented, and of a graceful shape,‡ which contained the ashes of the departed chief, and sometimes also his charred bones,§ there is one instance of the

* King's Munimenta Antiqua.—Rowland's *Mona Antiqua*.

† Ciske—chest or treasure—Bhana, death—O'Reilly's Dict.—Stewart's Hist. of Armagh, p. 610.

‡ A large Cairn near Mr. Stewart's in the county, of Down was some years ago levelled ; in it was found a small cave in the centre, in which were a great number of urns, of a deep red, like the Etruscan vases, and adorned by well executed a-la-Grec borders : round the cave was a circle of stone coffins, all placed with the head towards the cave ;—only six urns were saved, and the coffins were used by the proprietor in making drains.

A Cairn opened in the same county contained two urns, a small and a large one, well made and nicely ornamented, Survey of Down, p. 305.—See also Hist. of Armagh, where an engraving of one is given

§ See a curious account of an ancient cemetery in the county of Armagh, discovered in the year 1713, which was chiefly filled with earthen urns of ashes and bones. . Very near it

unburnt bones being placed on each side of the urn, in two parcels, neatly bound up with *copper wire*.^{*} And in a few others, round glass bottles, (evincing an early acquaintance with the manufacture of glass) and beads,[†] such as are called Druid beads in Wales, and Glain-naidr,[‡] in Scotland and the Western Islands,[§] where they have been found in similar situations. In these sacred cairns it was customary^{||} to place the remains of chiefs and heroes, and with them their favourite dog, their ornaments and weapons, which are often discovered beneath the Crom-leac, the Cairn, or the Pillar-stone, which so frequently stands adjacent. Many Cairns appear to have been formed over a Cromleac; this has, in various instances, occurred near Armagh,[¶] where several Cairns having been pulled down, discovered underneath a Crom-leac, and buried beneath this altar was an urn or bones. The same circumstance has been observed in Scotland.^{**} These burial Cairns are seldom of as great size as the altar cairn, which often covers a large space,

stood an altar eight feet long by four broad, upon which, it is conjectured, the bodies were burned, as in the earth around it were mixed bones and pieces of coal, and the stones bore the mark of fire. Close to the altar was a very deep pit filled with unctuous black matter, as if the refuse of the burnings had been thrown in there. Among the urns of ashes were intermixed tombs which contained only unburnt bones and no urns—whence it is evident that both modes of sepulture were in use at the same time.—Phil. Trans. vi. p. 64. Edit. 1809—Hutton, Shaw, and Pearson.

^{*} Smith's Hist. Cork, II. 411.

[†] Lhwyd describes these beads as having a snake painted round them; and concludes that the ova anguina of the Druids were these glass beads. In Scotland they are accounted sacred, and in some places are on May-day steeped in water, with which the cattle are afterwards sprinkled, to preserve them from Elf-bolts.—Phil. Trans. vi. 20—21. Edit. 1809, Hutton, &c.

[‡] Glain—Glass, and perhaps Naoimh, holy—or Neamdha, heavenly.

[§] Pennant's Tour, 343.

^{||} Transactions R. I. A. XIV. p. 110.

[¶] History of Armagh, p. 609.

^{**} Pennant's Tour to the Western Highlands, p. 343.

and rises even to sixty or seventy feet in height, having on the top sometimes a Crom-leac, sometimes a flat stone of large size, upon which the fire was lighted, and sometimes a pillar-stone.

Such artificial high places are generally situated upon an eminence, frequently upon the tops of hills and mountains; and these stations were so chosen as to form a chain of connexion with each other in such a manner, that on the festival days, the first of May and the first of November most especially, the fires of Bel, were seen from one to the other over the whole country. At these times all household fires were extinguished, to be relighted by a brand from the sacred fire.*

The Cairn was the Pyramid† of these countries, and was used for the same purpose as it appears to be still applied in Hindostan‡—as a lofty altar of sacrifice visible to a surrounding multitude. The reverence still felt by the lower classes towards these sacred elevations is so great that they even now carry stones to add to the heap.§ To the remains of this ancient superstition may be ascribed the modern Taimh-leacta (or rather leac-da, which is a small cairn, raised in memory of the dead, by passengers throwing a stone of

* Transactions R. I. A. XIV. p. 122.—Collect. de Reb. Hib. II. p. 275. et seq.—The incidental mention in the Book of Armagh, of the anger of King Loigaire and his Magi, at the lighting of a fire by St. Patrick, on a day of idolatrous solemnity, and before that in the king's palace had been kindled, not only bears testimony to the existence of the custom, but proves the antiquity of the MS. A more modern writer would not have been satisfied with such an indirect allusion to it.—Betham Antiq. Res. p. 314.

† Collect. Reb. Hib. III. 146. Preface to Essay on Hallow-Eve, and Kircher there quoted.

‡ Origin of Pagan Idolatry, III. 237.—Asiat. Res. X. p. 134, et seq.

§ The western Highlanders of Scotland, whose descent, language, and customs are derived from the same origin as the Irish, when they wish to engage a person's particular good will, declare that they will add a stone to his cairn; meaning that they will do all in their power to honour his memory.—Pennant's Tour to West. Highlands, 299.—Macpherson's Antiquities of Scotland, p. 291.

any sort upon the heap) which has been reared to those who, in the rebellion of 1798, fell at the battle of Wicklow Gap.*

In the county of Kilkenny, on the hill of Clogh-Manta is a large Cairn, eighty-seven paces in circumference; it is surrounded by a circular enclosure of stones, which contains more than two acres. Clogh-Manta signifies the stone of the Great God; the name *Man* is said to be one of the oldest appellations of God, and usually found in connection with the remains of the primitive idolatry; wherever that word forms a part of the name of any district, that district will be found to abound in altars, cairns, and circles of stones.†

In the same county, on Tory Hill, called in Irish Slieb-Grian the Hill of the Sun, stands a cairn of great size, having on the top a large flat altar-stone.‡ It is remarkable that a tradition still exists at Waterford, that in ancient times the citizens went in procession, on certain days of solemnity, to the conical hill of Slieb-Grian in the neighbouring county of Kilkenny, and there offered sacrifice.§ The ancient Irish name of the harbour of Waterford was Cuan-na-Grioth, the Harbour of the Sun.¶

Some Cairns contain cells or chambers; these probably united the characters of a temple and a sacred sepulchre; the interior seems to denote this—the narrow passage—the small chambers—the altar stone of some—the monumental urn and burnt bones, all point out the

* Brewster's Beauties of Ireland, I. 385.

† Tighe's Survey of Kilkenny, 623.—Trans. R. I. A. II. p. 64.—Sir William Drummond in his *Origines* proves *Man* to be synonymous with Osiris, Baal, Mendes, and the Sun.—Vol. II. book 4. ch. 12, p. 398 to 407.—Rowland Mona *Antiq.* p. 49.—Bryant I. 402—II. pp. 8, 198, 307, 471.

‡ Tighe's Survey of Kilkenny, 622.

§ Ryland's History of Waterford, p. 109.

¶ Ibid.

union between the funereal and the adorative rites. One of these cairns with cells, at Ballymacdermot, county of Louth, has been examined, and three small chambers were discovered, in one of which was an urn containing ashes.* At Annacloghmullen, county of Armagh, an elliptical cairn of great size was laid open some years since, and the entrance found to be of uncommon regularity, having a pillar stone standing erect close at each side of it. It contains four small chambers, one within another, strongly resembling the most ancient Egyptian temples, in which successive chambers of approach lead to the sacred Cella. The front bears a strong likeness to the temple of Esnay, one of the oldest fanes in Egypt; and it so greatly resembles an excavated cavern-temple, as to satisfy the mind that it was intended as a near imitation of one. In one of the apartments stood a very elegantly shaped urn, resembling an Etruscan vase, but uncoloured and filled with ashes.†

Tumuli of this description, with chambers in the interior, have been found in all parts of the kingdom; in Mayo that of Fort Robert, on the river Moy, in which are seven or eight small cells, with narrow communicating passages, forming a sort of labyrinth; and at Ross Carbery, county of Cork, near the old Cathedral,‡ one containing a vast number of small apartments, mostly twelve feet long and six broad, with winding passages from one to the other; at one end of each cell stood a broad flag-stone, like the back-stone of a fire-place, and the quantity of soot deposited upon the low vaulted roof and the side walls evinced that fire had been much used within them.§ In the county of Westmeath, in one of the

* History of Armagh, p. 610.

† Ibid. See an engraving of the urn and the front of the cave there given.

‡ Smith's History of Cork, II. 407.—Townsend's Survey of Cork.

§ Possibly the fires of Sol Infernus, which blazed in the cavern midnight orgies, may have



L.C.B. del.

The Cairn of New Grange,
 And the Entrance on the South Side,
 County of Louth.

Hills of Loughcrew, which are called by the peasants the Witches Hops, is an extensive excavation, consisting of three large chambers with a narrow passage leading to them. In one of these rooms is a flat altar-stone of considerable size;—near to this artificial cave stand two lofty pillar stones known among the people, by the names of “*the speaking stones*,” and “*the Whisperers*.”* Names evidently traditional of there having been oracles or divinations given from these “dark places of the earth.”†

But the most remarkable Cairn is that of New Grange,‡ county of Meath; this is of great size, being estimated by Governor Pownall§ to be seventy feet high, and to contain an hundred and eighty thousand tons of stone. This prodigious tumulus is now so grass grown that it appears like an earth-work, but it is composed entirely of rounded coggle-stones,|| which must have been brought from the sea side, a distance of at least twelve miles. Around the base is a circle of very large upright stones, of which only a few are now standing; these are from seven to nine feet high, and two of them are so placed as to indicate the entrance. When it was seen by Lhwyd, who published the earliest description of New Grange, the top was crowned by a tall pillar stone, and the broad flat stone

burnt on these altars. In the Mithratic Excavations in Persia soot and smoke are encrusted on the sides and vaulted roofs.—K. Porter's Travels in Persia, Vol. II. pp. 542, 602.

* From the Rev. J. Egan. Two upright stones in the island of Col, are there called the whispering stones.—E. D. Clark's Life, I. p. 308.

† Psalm, lxxiv. 20. Bible Trans.—Isaiah, lxxiv. 20—21.

‡ A name imagined by General Vallancey to have been derived from Grian-Uagh, the Cave of the Sun.

§ Archeologia II.

|| Most of the cairns described by Pennant in his Western Tour are formed of round stones from the shore. Possibly such stones were supposed to possess peculiar virtues or holiness, as he mentions some round black ones, preserved in the Cathedral of Oransay, upon which the people made oaths, that were regarded as more binding than any others. In the Letters from

which had formed the door was extant—it had been placed edgewise, and was rudely carved in spiral lines.*

The entrance is in the side of the mount, at some distance above the base, and is so low that the person going in must creep on the hands and knees for the first four or five yards; at this part one of the side stones has either fallen, or was originally placed† diagonally, so as to leave an extremely small space through which to force the body. That difficulty overcome, the passage immediately becomes high enough to allow a man to stand erect: this gallery, as it has been called, is sixty-two feet long, the sides being formed of stones of great length set on end, and the roof by long flat stones laid transversely; it rises gradually as it conducts to a dome-shaped chamber, about eighteen feet diameter, and twenty feet high to the centre stone;‡ the dome springs unevenly at eight, nine, and ten feet from the ground, and is formed of thick flag-stones laid in courses, each of which project a little beyond the course next below it, till the whole is closed with a flat stone, nearly a square, of three feet ten inches. Around this chamber are three unequal recesses formed by upright stones, about eight feet high, covered with a large flag, each niche or cell resembling a large *Ciste-Bhana*; thus the interior of this Cairn bears the shape of a cross, pretty nearly that which is called the cross of *Hermes* or *Taut*; a sacred form in which many of the most ancient temples were built.§ In each of the side recesses stands a large bason, somewhat

the Irish Highlands, it is said to be customary for mothers to pile round white stones on the graves of their children. And a similar practice is described by some of our travellers, as obtaining along the eastern coast of Africa.

* Philosophical Transactions, V. p. 694. Edit. 1809, abridged by Hutton, &c.

† The latter seems most probable, as none of the neighbouring stones are displaced or shaken.

‡ Archeologia, II. p. 255.

§ Origin Pagan Idolatry, III. p. 287.

resembling the rock basons described by Dr. Borlase; these are from three to four feet in diameter, and about three feet in depth; within the concavity of the perfect bason are two small hollows placed close together, and large enough to hold a child's head;* the other bason is much broken by the injudicious curiosity of visitors. The right hand bason stands in a broad shallow saucer, possibly to receive the overflowing of the bowl. When Lhwyd visited the cave a spring of clear water dropped into this vase—perhaps it was made use of in the mysteries; but this spring does not now continue. The left-hand bason was always single.†

The supporting stones near the basons, and some few others in the passage, have upon them some coarse sculpture, apparently of a sort of character, and in the form of spiral lines, like a snake, such as were on the door-stone. Governor Pownal, after examining many ancient alphabets, was persuaded that these characters were Phenician.‡

In the centre recess, opposite to the entrance, is a large flat stone, probably the stone of sacrifice, and from the thick blackness of smoke observable there,§ and no where else, it has been evidently used either for that purpose or for the preservation of the perpetual fire, such as was kept continually burning in their sacred

* Sir R. C. Hoare's *Tour in Ireland*, p. 255.

† *Philosophical Trans.* Vol. V. p. 694. Abridged Edit. 1809. This is the only instance hitherto, of rock basons in Ireland.

‡ *Archeologia*, II. p. 259.—In Sir W. Ouseley's second volume of *Travels in the East*, there is an engraving of a very few characters cut on a stone near Fassa, which much resemble the Irish Ogham, and some of the figures at New Grange.

§ This circumstance has not been noticed in any of the descriptions, but was very evident to the writer in various visits paid to New Grange.

The Mithratic caves examined by Sir K. Porter, all contained large flat altar stones.—See the *Account of the Caves of Maraga*, Vol. II. p. 496.

In that of Karefto there was also a pillar-stone in the centre. *Ibid.* p. 542.

temple caves by the Brahmins of India, the Magi of Persia, and the Gaurs or Druids of England and Ireland.*

When New Grange was first opened in 1699, it contained the two rock basons, at opposite sides, and in the circular area a pillar stone, on each side of which lay a human skeleton. There was also found underneath the pillar-stone two gold coins, one of the Emperor Valentinian, and one of Theodosius, from which it may be judged, that this cave temple was constructed before the invasion of the Ostmen or Danes,† to whom this Cairn has been sometimes attributed.

This tumulus, it may be observed, unites in itself the artificial mount or high place, the sacred funereal cave temple, the pillar stone, and the circle of upright stones. The resemblance of this remarkable Cairn to the Egyptian pyramids struck Governor Pownall so forcibly, that he does not hesitate to avow his opinion that it was constructed for the same purposes,‡ while Mr. Faber observes the likeness it bears to some of the most ancient Indian pagodas, built to resemble a large cavern. “In New Grange,” he remarks, “we have the narrow passage, the central chamber rising into an oviform dome like that at Canara, the cistern for purification, and the mystic cross, a figure very frequently adopted in the construction of temples; such multiplied peculiarities serve to shew that the tumulus of New Grange was thrown up with the very same ideas which prevailed among the Babylonians, Hindoos, and Egyptians.”§

* Maurice's Indian Antiq. I. p. 178.—and II. p. 177.

† Phil. Trans. VI. p. 695.—Hutton's Abridgment, 1809.

‡ That these purposes were the celebration of the Cavern funereal mysteries, has been very ably argued in a late number of the Classical Journal, in an article on the Egyptian Pyramids.

§ Origin of Pagan Idolatry, III, p. 267.

In confirmation of these ideas it may be added, that the resemblance which this cairn bears to the early cavern temple, whether excavated in the living rock, or formed in the artificial tumulus, may be traced in every particular. The two upright stones indicating the low entrance,* which can be penetrated only in a creeping posture; the narrow aperture, underneath the sloping stone, through which the aspirant could with difficulty insinuate himself, feet foremost; the enlarged passage along which he was dragged by the feet with terrifying rapidity, to the mysterious adytum; all are found here, and all bearing an extraordinary similitude to the grotto of Trophonius, which was an excavated cave, twelve feet high by six wide, with a low oven-shaped entrance, on each side of which stood an obelisk; a narrow passage; an aperture difficult to pass;†—in short, analogous in every part. The same general arrangement may be observed in the caves of Canara in India; in the excavated temples of Thebaid, in those of Ethiopia so frequently described by Burchard, and in the Pyramids that have been opened. In the temples also the same object is kept in view, and the dark sacellum is expressly said, both by Lycophron and Pausanius,‡ to have been denominated the cave, the cella.

Of the same character as New Grange, Annacloghmullen, and the many other cavern temples still remaining in Ireland, appear to have been the excavations in Mount Olivet, near Jerusalem.§ In this Mount, the scene of Solomon's idolatrous worship, of Ash-

* Though not with the same striking precision as at Anna Cloghmullen before mentioned.

† Clarke's Travels in Greece and the Holy Land, Pt. II. p. 4.—Class. Jour. No. LV. p. 295.
—Origin Pagan Idolatry, III. p. 260.

‡ Ibid. III. p. 259.

§ Clarke's Travels, Part II. Greece and Holy Land, p. 579.

Origin of Pagan Idolatry, III. pp. 206—259.

taroth, Chemosh and Milcom, there are several chambers, one of which is described to resemble a hollow round pyramid or cone, the vertex being even with the soil.—This “place of abomination” evinces the great prevalence and extreme antiquity of the cavern worship, which from the knowledge gleaned out of pagan authors, and the scanty records of heathen nations, appears to have embraced and united several objects, all however by an extraordinary concatenation intimately connected with the worship of the sun. That such places were frequent in Judea is evident from the strong reprobation with which they are mentioned by the Prophets. And it appears from Ezekiel that various modes of idol worship were practised in union. In his eighth chapter* he describes the subterranean temple with all the idols of Israel, the weeping for Thammuz, who has been identified with Adonis, Osiris, and Serapis, the Sol Infernus; and the worship of the sun by five-and-twenty† men looking towards the East.

The Irish name Cairn, as well as the Welsh Carnedde, is thought‡ to be derived from the Hebrew, keren-nedh, a coped sloping heap; it seems to have been commonly employed in the most solemn transactions in the earliest times, and to have then borne a sacred character; as appears from the Scripture account of the agreement between Jacob and Laban,§ where on their entering into a covenant, Jacob had a pile of stones raised, each party giving a name to the heap, but both names bearing the same

* Ezek. viii. 10, 14, 16.

† It has been observed, that the number, twenty-five, is very remarkable, as being one of the Egyptian Cycles, and much attended to in the worship of Apis.—Class. Jour. No. LXIV. p. 371.

‡ Mona Antiqua, p. 218.

§ Gen. xxxi. 44.

signification—the heap of witness, and the heap of testimony. Jacob and Laban also eat bread together upon this high place, to shew in the most solemn manner their return to friendship; and afterwards Jacob offered a sacrifice to God upon this mount, and he and his men kept watch upon it all night. He also set up a pillar stone, expressly calling it a witness between himself and Laban. In the whole of this detail we see that the cairn and pillar-stone was invested with a character of sanctity, and also that it was an accustomed character, not a new one then bestowed, but forming, as it were, a part of the patriarchal ritual.

The Dorians are said to have given Apollo the epithet *Karneios*.* The cairn may have derived its name from having been dedicated as a place of sacrifice to *Karneios* Apollo, or possibly the Hebrew name of *Kerenedh* being of so great antiquity, may in consequence of the worship offered to him upon this coped heap, have conferred the title upon the god. There were also feasts called *Carneia* held in Sparta in honour of Apollo.†

The cairn thus anciently venerated, we have seen continues to be revered by the Irish even at the present day, nor are they singular in so doing, the same feeling exists throughout the east, of which numberless instances may be given, but one or two will

* Dr. Chas. O'Connor, *Bib. Stowensis*, I. p. 47.

Divine Apollo joys in burning heaps,

Silius, B. v. ver. 175.

On the top of the mountains of Soracte were the grove and temple of Apollo, and also his Cairn, to which Silius here alludes.—Wood on the religion of the Britons, p. 41.

Virgil also declares that the Sabines worshipped Apollo, their chief god, on Soracte, by fires burned on Stone heaps.

† Ovid speaks of the *Dea Carneia*, in his *Fasti*, as a goddess, so ancient that her worship was antiquated—he adds that she had been anciently called *Granè*. These names are still familiar in Ireland.—*Bib. Stowensis*, I. p. 46. The *Carnea*, were held in May, and that month was called *Carnius*.

suffice. In Nepaul, tumuli of this nature are numerous, and a divine spirit is supposed to inhabit them, the natives therefore never pass by one without stopping to adore the divinity.* Another example offers a curious existing parallel for those superstitious practices, which have very lately been described as annually occurring at the holy well of Struil, in the county of Down. In the Karnatic are three tumuli which they call temples, each of which however is only a cairn of stones, containing a small chamber, like the Ciste-Bhanas found in so many of our smaller cairns; these are dedicated to the spirits of men who have died unmarried, and therefore became *Virika*, a sort of deified spirit. To those manes offerings are made, with superstitious rites, and if these ceremonies be neglected they are supposed to appear in dreams, and to torment and menace those who ought to have performed this duty.† Thus we see the sanctity with which the pagan world at the present day, as, universally in old times, invests the high place. In all countries, Egypt, India, and the European nations, it bore, and in parts of America and the islands of the Pacific Ocean, as well as in many parts of the East, it does still bear the same character, the same mysterious union of sepulchral and adorative rites.

Closely connected with the cairn, are the circles of upright stones, usually called Druidic circles. These are to be found in various countries, and always retaining the same connexion. On Mount Ida in Phrygia the high place sacred to Idean Jove,‡ on Lebanus, in Persia,§ in Norway, and Sweden, where they usually

* Account of Nepaul, by Colonel Kirkpatric, p. 60.

† Buchanan's Journey in Mysore, &c. I. p. 359.

‡ Origin of Pagan Idolatry.—Clarke's Travels, II. p. 132. quarto edition.

§ Ousely's Travels in the East, II. p. 132.

surround a small hill containing a cell or stone-built grotto:* there are many in England, particularly in the south western district; in Scotland, and in Ireland they abound. Their ancient date in Britain is proved by the circumstance that in several instances they have been injured by the Roman roads which have been carried across them, and to which they must therefore have been prior.† None of those remaining in Ireland are equal in grandeur to Stonehenge in Wiltshire, nor to the large circle in Lewis, one of the Western Isles of Scotland, which is described as the most striking monument of this kind in Great Britain, after Stonehenge:‡ nor to the great one which covers so large a space at Carnac in Normandy.§

The circles generally stand on elevated ground, such as the side of a moderate eminence, or encompassing an artificial hill. They frequently surround a cairn, as was instanced at New Grange, where the stones are placed at about one-third of the whole height above the base. They often encircle a cromleac, as at Bally-na-Schrehen,¶ county of Londonderry; while many instances occur of a pillar stone forming the centre, as at Moore Lodge, county of Antrim,|| a tall pillar-stone is encircled by two concentric circles of large stones: the space contained within the monument is remarkable for returning, to a stamp of the foot upon the ground near its centre, a long resounding sound.

* Coxe's Travels.

† Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, Introd lxxxvii.

‡ Macculloch's Western Isles, I. p. 186.

§ Stothard's Tour in Normandy, p. 252.

¶ Survey of Londonderry, p. 496.

|| Parochial Surveys, I. p. 387.

The dimensions of these circles are very different : some are only twelve feet, some twenty feet in diameter, while many are of much greater size. Some consist of one circle of stones, others of two, and many of three ; in some cases the circles are placed one within the other ; but occasionally a large circle has a small one placed on either side. Of this latter disposition there is a remarkable instance on the mountain above Rosstrevor, county of Down, where a circle of seventy-five feet is on each side supported by a small one of twenty feet diameter, and the whole is contained within an ellipse of about an hundred and twenty feet in breadth by two hundred and ten in length. The whole of this druidical structure was traceable a few years back, when the above measurements were made.

At Grange, half a mile from Lough Gur, near Kilballyowen, county of Limerick, there are still remaining, in good preservation, three circles of different dimensions, which stand so near each other, that they probably were employed at the same time in the celebration of the mysteries. On the north-east side stands the smallest, forty-five feet in diameter. A perfect circle, formed of stones of large size, placed at intervals, all from four to five feet high, and several of them with squared flat tops. Fifty feet south-west of this circle there is a second, measuring an hundred and sixty feet in diameter. Sixty stones only are left, in some parts standing quite close together, in others a wide gap between. These stones are all about three feet in height, and the ground around and within the circle is perfectly level. About twenty feet south-east stands an irregular conical stone four feet high ; and at forty-five feet due east of this, another oblong stone lies prostrate, seeming to have fallen. It is worthy of observation, that the situation in which the conical stone and the pillar-stone are here placed, is much the same

as that in which some remarkable stones of corresponding character are found at a circular temple called Temple Brian, in the county of Cork.* The same arrangement was followed at Stonehenge, and at Rollrich in Oxfordshire,† and may be noticed in Sir Wm. Ouseley's description of the circle and pillar stones near Dáráb in Persia.‡

An hundred and twenty feet due south of this circle a third presents itself, an hundred and thirty feet across. Only forty-three stones of various dimensions remain, forming a perfect circle; some of them are very small, while one in the north-east part of the circle is seven feet and a half high by five in breadth; nearly opposite to it stands another very little smaller. Many of the intermediate stones have been removed, and a part of the north side of the circumference has been much disturbed by a ditch lately made close to it. The whole of this southern circle is surrounded by a mound about fifteen feet broad and about four feet high, which skirts along the outside edge of the stones, enclosing the area within them as a pit of three or four feet deep.§

The number of stones employed in composing these circles varies also; but it is thought that they expressed periods of time or astronomical epochs.|| The most frequent number is twelve, the months of the year: nineteen stones are also common, and are considered to record the cycle of nineteen years. Stonehenge, and some of the greater circles, are computed to have been originally formed of six hundred and sixty stones, which shadowed out the

* Smith's History of Cork, II. p. 418.

† Brewster's Beauties of Ireland, II. p. 470.

‡ Ouseley's Travels in the East, II. p. 124.

§ The Rev. W. L. Beaufort, who measured the whole, and made a plan of the ground.

|| Maurice Ind. Antiq. vi. p. 118.

great cycle of the Egyptians, Indians, and Druids, consisting of six hundred and sixty years.

Besides this astronomical character, the circle also bore a second, a commemorative character; alluding, as is explained by Taliessen, the bard and mythological historian of Wales, whose assertions are confirmed and illustrated by the researches of our oriental scholars in the sanscrit sacred books, to the deluge, and the events connected with it. The early erections seem to have been a species of hieroglyphic, a symbolic record of those great events: the high place represented Mount Ararat; the cave, the dark interior of the ark: the ark was called the world, because in it were preserved man and all creatures: the cave, or cella, was also called the world, because it represented the ark: in the same spirit the huge stones composing the circle portrayed the mountain tops, as they appeared around Ararat, when the flood had partially subsided, and the Ark remained wedged between the two peaks of the mountain.* Some circles seem to have expressed both ideas; some may have been simply astronomical, while others possibly were wholly of the commemorative character. In New Grange the latter may be traced—the artificial high place representing Mount Ararat: within it the cave typifying the inside of the ark resting on the mountain side; while the outside circle of stones was expressive of the mountain tops. When the people anciently assembled for the performance of their idolatrous rites in such places, surrounded as they were by the hallowed forest, it may easily be conceived how different their appearance was from what they present in their now denuded state: then the deep shade of the consecrated grove, relieved only by the ruddy glare from the sacred fire, which indistinctly displayed

* Origin of Pagan Idolatry, p. 190, vol. I., where this subject is amply discussed, and various authorities given.

the rough colossal stones, the ponderous altar, and the mystical cavern temple, must have produced a strong feeling of the mysterious and the awful.

The stone-circles were also the temples of judicial assembly where justice was administered, where the great council deliberated on affairs of national importance, and where kings and leaders were elected.* This custom continued in Ireland even to the days of Spencer;† so also in Sweden, so late as 1396, when Ericus, was inaugurated on the great stone in the centre of the circle called the Morasteen, near Upsal.‡ Old Upsal was remarkable for the worship of the primitive gods of Sweden, and the name Upsal is expressive of this circumstance—sal implying the house or portico of the gods, and up, upen or open—thus it signifies the open courts of the gods.§ The religious and judicial character are here combined in the most distinct manner.

The same united character, as belonging to consecrated stones, may also be traced in Scripture. We are told,|| that by the command of the Lord, Joshua pitched at Gilgal twelve stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel; stones of memorial to future generations, of the miraculous passage of the river Jordan, and of their entrance into the promised land. It is not said that these testimonial stones were placed in a circle; but from the name Gilgal, which expresses circle upon circle, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they were: this term is explained¶ to mean the “rolling away the reproach

* *Mona Antiqua*, 89.—Perhaps this is the origin of the stone tribunal of the Grecians, and of the “set thrones of judgment,” mentioned in Psalm 129, 6, and in other parts of Scripture.

† *Spencer's View*, p. 11. Edit. Dub. 1809.

‡ *Borlace's Antiq. Cornwall*. Dr. E. D. Clarke's *Scandinavian Travels*, ix. p. 216. Octavo Edition.

§ *Ibid.* p. 216.

|| *Josh.* v. 2.

¶ *Ibid.* v. 9.

of Egypt," yet like many other ancient appellations it may have possessed a double meaning.

It is certain that Gilgal continued in after times to be a place of importance; Samuel went there annually to administer justice; Saul was crowned there;*—there he offered sacrifice before Samuel came there to him,† and there he received the intelligence of his being rejected as king, in the very spot where the people had assembled to confirm the kingdom to him. The coincidence also of the three places of judgment, where in his circuit Samuel yearly judged Israel, with the position of recorded stones of consecration, Gilgal, Bethel and Mitzpeh, is very remarkable: all these circumstances seem to declare that both the circle of stones and the single stone, were of ancient patriarchal institution, retained by the children of Israel, and not disapproved of by the Lord until they were perverted to idolatrous uses.

Numerous circles remain in Scotland, where universal tradition declares them to have been places of sacrifice and worship in heathen times, and many of the existing names express their ancient sanctity. In the Highlands they are often called *Caer*, which in Gaelic signifies an oracle, a throne, a place of address. They are also called temple-stones, temples, and chapels. One in Bamfshire is named the Blessed Chapel.‡ The western Highlanders use the expression of going to the clachans, that is, to the stones for going to church—probably the remains of an ancient phrase for going to worship, having now a modern application.§

* 1 Sam. x. 8.

† Ibid. xiii. 8.

‡ Dr. Garden on Circular Monuments—*Archeologia*, I. pp. 315—316.

§ Pennant's Western Tour.—Jamieson's Gaelic Dictionary, word Clachan.—The number of statistical county surveys there quoted prove the phrase to be in general use throughout the Highlands.

The stone circle exists not only in these northern countries, but has been traced throughout the East, where it appears to have invariably united a civil with a religious character. Chardin* mentions large circles of upright stones in Persia, which tradition calls the chairs of those who sat in councils—ponderous chairs, each stone being so large that eight men could hardly move it. Sir William Ouseley also describes circles of stones in parts of Persia, and one in particular, near the ruined city of Dáráb, perfectly resembling a British druidical ring, and composed of stones, many of which were twenty feet high, and some twenty-five feet. A rude pillar-stone occupies the centre ; and outside of the ring, at some distance from the encircling stones, there stands a very lofty pillar-stone twenty feet high : the whole is at some distance enclosed by a bank of earth and a deep ditch.† The circle, the centre stone, the outer pillar, and the encompassing bank, are all situated relatively to each other, precisely as at Temple Brian, in the county of Cork, the Irish and the Persian monument having an astonishing agreement with each other. It is remarkable that all the remains of this kind are by the Persians attributed to the Guebres, or fire worshippers, and always called “ Fire Altars”—“ Stones of the Fire Temple,” or by some name of of the same signification.‡

Circles formed of large masses of rough stone abound in Malabar. A few years since, several in the neighbourhood of Calicut were examined, and in the middle of each, at the depth of five feet underground, was discovered an earthen urn, resembling those found in the barrows of Wiltshire. One of these circles had a cave in the centre, to which was a descent of seven steps ; this cell

* Chardin's *Travels in Persia*, p. 371. And in Ireland we have the stone chair of the Brehons.

† Ouseley's *Travels in the East*, II. pp. 122—124.

‡ See throughout Ouseley's *Travels*, and Captain Keppel's *Personal Narrative*.

was excavated in the rock ; in some of the circles the upright stones were ten or twelve feet high, and upon each upright was balanced horizontally a large stone, frequently twelve feet in diameter. The greater number of these circles are situated on the banks of the river Canvery.* It may be observed, that these pagan monuments are usually in the vicinity of water, which was essential to the celebration of the mysteries. The sea, a lake, a river, a streamlet, or a sacred spring ; of the latter many yet retain their ancient holiness, and continue to be viewed with a superstitious veneration,† as the well of some patron saint.

It can scarcely be doubted that these circles, which prevail over so large portion of the globe, a portion including all those countries which were the first peopled, and the earliest in civilization, must have originated in the most remote times, and that they are, in all reasonable probability, the remains of patriarchal customs, which obtaining before the dispersion, were carried by the descendants of the three sons of Noah to all parts of the world.

The pillar-stone is so frequently joined with the circle, the cairn, the crom-leac, and the sacred oak grove, which anciently flourished around these monuments, that it cannot consistently be passed over in silence.

The history of this idol, for such it became, has been so completely lost in the obscurity of past ages, that no writer seems as yet to have thrown any certain light upon the origin of the sanctity with which such stones have been invested, or to have

* Fragments to Calmet's Dictionary, by C. Taylor, iv. p. 505.

† See the curious detail in the *Belfast Magazine*, Nos. II. and IV. of the ceremonies still practised at Struil in Downshire, and at Lough Derg in Donegal, which bear so striking a resemblance to the heathen purifications, as anciently performed in Greece, and still practised in Hindostan. Yet both the lake and the well are under the sanction of presiding saints !

accounted for the manner in which stones of varying shapes and dimensions came to be considered as emblematic of the Deity. Yet the earliest records, sacred and profane, testify them to have borne a highly sacred character. In the simplicity of primeval times, large stones were used for memorials, perhaps as conspicuous objects of an unperishing nature, which should serve as solemn testimonials, and continually recall to those dwelling around the event which it was "to witness."*

In this light they are mentioned in Scripture. When Jacob entered into a solemn covenant with Laban,† he set up a stone, declaring it to be a witness; and accordingly the following morning, Laban, in his parting address to Jacob, says, "This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness." Again, on his way to Padan Aram, Jacob sleeping at Luz, was favoured with a vision from God, and he set up for a memorial a pillar, which he anointed with oil, and called the place Bethel, the house of God.‡ The word used signifies a pillar, sacred, memorial, or witnessing; and from the prefix Parkhurst says should be translated "The witness."

When Rachel died he placed upon her grave a pillar-stone as a memorial; and Moses adds, that it was there in his day. A strong proof of the respect in which such monuments were held, since it remained unharmed in a country possessed by a race inimical to that of Jacob, and whose descendants it was

* The witness stone was a rude hieroglyphic; those who lived soon after the Flood could never turn their eyes upon Ararat without feeling it to be a lasting memorial of that event. Hence in the spirit of commemoration which pervaded this early institution, when mankind quitted the vicinity of the mountain, they erected, on solemn occasions, great stones which were hieroglyphics of the craggy peak, and were also to stand as durable memorials or witnesses.—See Townsend on Idolatry.

† Gen. xxxi. 45, &c.

‡ Ibid. xxviii. 18.

known were at a future period to wrest from them the Land of Canaan.

The pillar-stone appears here in its ancient patriarchal character, simply as a memorial or testimony. By degrees this primitive purpose was lost, but the durability of the character of sanctity attached to it remaining, accompanied by the mystery of antiquity, it became an object, first simply of reverence, then of worship, and finally, it seems to have been considered as an emblem of the undivided unchanging essence of the greater gods. Hence Buddha is now, and has been from time immemorial, worshipped in the shape of a large black stone, in India, Ceylon, Pegu, and indeed over all the east.* Cubic stones, according to Proclus, were dedicated to Baal, Pluto, and all the mundane gods. The stone of Butis was of immense size, a cube of sixty feet; the famous Caaba† was also a black cubic stone, over which Mahomet sagaciously built the temple of Mecca, thereby securing on his side the superstitious feelings of the wavering Arabians, who had anciently worshipped this stone, and who, along with the pilgrims from all parts of the Mahomedan world, continue to offer to it, even now, a species of adoration.‡

Serapis is in the hieroglyphical paintings of Egypt frequently represented in the form of a plain column, with one eye, and a scroll depending from the eye, painted upon it. Sometimes the column has a human face, the eyes drawn with depending scrolls in the same mysterious manner, surmounted by four capitals.§ The Se-

* Maurice Ind. Antiq. iii. p. 31.—Mithra, the Persian sun deity's name, is derived from a word signifying a rock.—Maurice Ind. Ant. vol. ii. p. 306.—Clas. Jour. No. lxi. p. 167.

† Caabah signifies a die, a square, a cube.—Sale's Alkoran.

‡ Burchard's Account of Mecca, and Bruce's Travels, II. p. 436, Octavo Edit.

§ Class. Jour. No. LXIV. p. 372.

rapean column is pronounced by Dr. Young, in his *Essay on Hieroglyphics*, to express stability; that this idea was one of those most strongly attached to the pillar in patriarchal times, appears in Scripture from the often repeated expression “the shepherd, the stone of Israel.” The rock-born deities, and the worship paid to them, are probably alluded to in those passages which seem at once to reprehend that worship, and to claim it. “I am the Rock of thy Salvation.” “Thy Rock of defence,” &c. &c.

The mountain-born Cybele was in Phrygia adored in the shape of a stone, which was believed to possess life;* and in Greece Mercury was frequently represented by a stone column. Thus the spirit of idolatry perverted the ancient symbolic meaning of these stones of testimony; from having been first venerated as emblems, they came to be considered as in themselves containing a divine essence, “statues furnished with some thing within them that had life and perception;”† even the memorial of the dead was at last thought to be “instinct with life,” since the spirit of the deceased was imagined to be an inhabitant of the pillar placed over his grave; and thence divine honours were paid to the stone.

The Welsh to this day regard these rude columns with much veneration, still calling them *Meini-Gwyr*, men-pillars,‡ as having marked the sepulchres of their ancient heroes; and in times of heathen superstition this veneration probably amounted to worship.

So amongst the Mongols they have divine stones, which receive a share of their worship; they call them *Sindamani Erdenih*, which

* *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*, II. p. 387.

† *Mona Antiq.* p. 226, and *Jamblichus* there cited.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 226.

they explain to mean “divinely holy, meritorious without measure.” *

In India also, where the worship of rocks and stones abounds so greatly, we find the same prevailing idea of their being endued with life, or divine presence. The Namburis or Malayala Brahmins, are considered to have the power, by certain forms of prayer, of influencing the gods to dwell in the idols dedicated to them. And Dr. Buchanan mentions, that having expressed his surprise at an idol, which had been one of much celebrity, being left to lie neglected outside the city gate, the people told him that one of the fingers having been broken, the god had deserted it, no mutilated image being a fit habitation for a god.†

Pillar-stones are mentioned along with the high place, the sacred grove, and under the sacred oak, in many parts of the Old Testament; in Leviticus‡ the Israelites are forbidden to rear any standing image or pillar; and still more strongly in Deuteronomy, as a thing which the “Lord God hated,”§ and which they are desired not to set up near an altar, nor to bow down to, nor worship them. Hence it appears, that at that time among the heathens such stones were customary objects of worship. Once invested with a divine character, other attributes were superadded in the progress of time, and the tapering or conical pillar-stone was considered as an emblem of the vivifying spirit of nature; and in this sense it is now worshipped throughout India. The conic or pyramidal stone bore also a second character, representative of a ray or beam of the sun,¶ which was

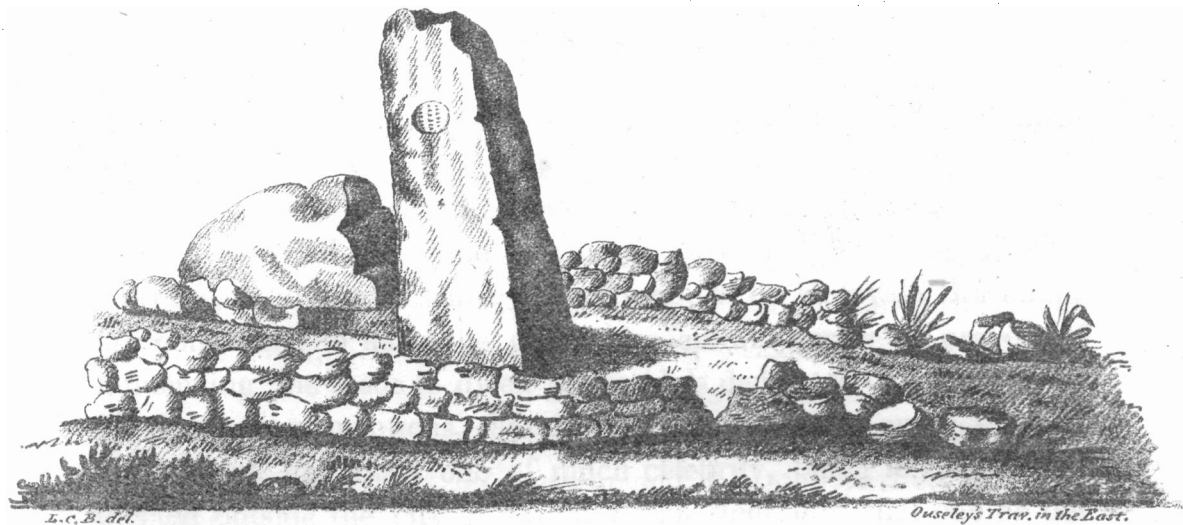
* Klaproth's Travels in the Caucasus, p. 103.

† Buchanan's Journey in the Mysore, II. pp. 59—424.

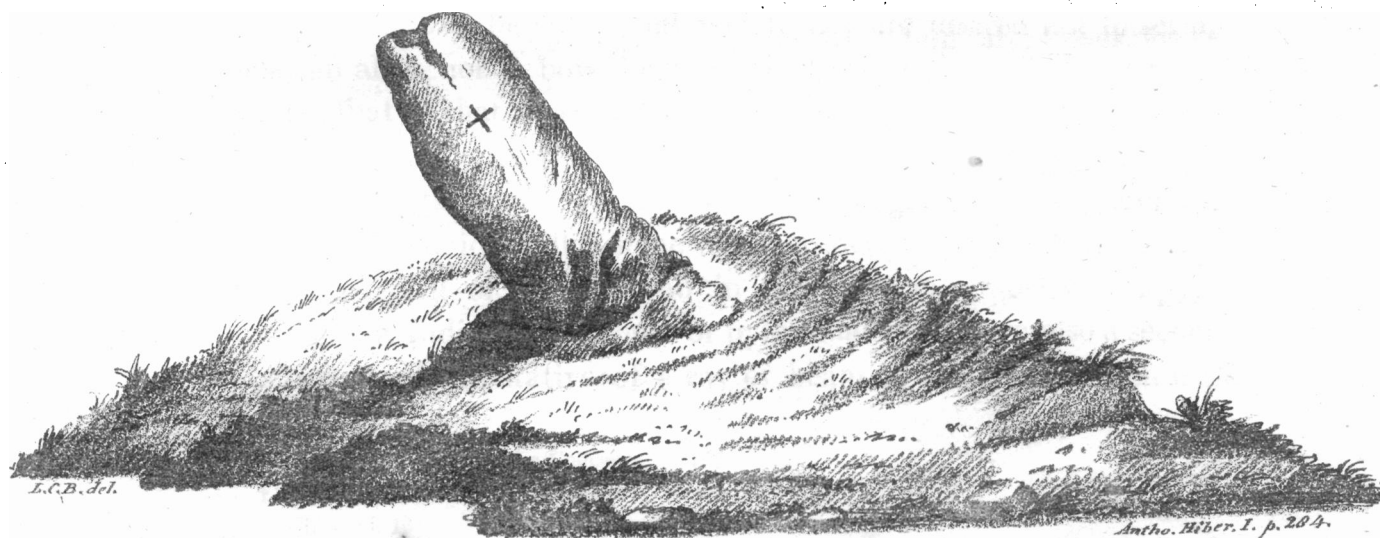
‡ Ch. xxvi. 1.

§ Ibid. xvi. 22.

¶ Maurice Ind. Antiq. iii. p. 87—vi. pp. 101—107. Bruce's Travels, i. p. 137. The sun of



The Fire Altar near Tang i Kerm in Persia.



The Pillar Stone at Kilgown,
Co. of Kildare.

supposed to contain, or to be the essence, of the great father of all ; and from this arose the double character of the pillar-stone, which it possesses in common with the obelisk. As a cone, both Eusebius and Proclus declare that it represented the earth ; but in its pyramidal form—spirit—for the pyramid allegorised the mundane soul which Plato says has the form of a pyramid,* and hence is derived its third or funereal character.

Stones of this nature abound in India, and have been frequently observed by travellers, but one instance out of the many will suffice. The god of the tribe Baydaru is a lofty mass of granite, placed on the apex of a low hill ; underneath it there is a natural cave, in which is also placed a rude stone, emblematic of the god above : here once a year all the Baydaru resort to make their offerings, and eat consecrated food.† Many similar stones also exist in Persia, as that already described within the ruins of Dáráb-gird. And a remarkable pillar stone near Tang-i-kerm, slightly tapering, about eleven feet high, and three feet and a half square at the bottom ; the top is hollowed like a bowl;‡ and on one side, contained in a sunken circle, is an inscription in Palalivi ; a space round this stone is enclosed by a low rude wall composed of rough stones of great size ; within about two hundred yards of the pillar a clear spring rises, which supplies a large bason. This monument was shewn as a fire-altar, and the hollow receptacles on the top

Heliogabalus was a pyramidal stone. Juggernaut in India is also a pyramidal stone ; and in all the sanctum sanctorum of the Indian cavern temples is found a pyramidal stone. *Class. Jour.* No. LV. p. 50. *Maurice Ind. Antiq.* II. p. 162.—Amber signifies solar or divine, hence the peasantry call the pillars of Stonehenge Amber-stones.—*Indian Antiquities*, vi. p. 111.

* *Essay on the Pyramids of Egypt.* *Class. Jour.* No. LV. 51.

† *Buchanan's Journey*, I. p. 359.

‡ The pillar stone of Kilgowan, county of Kildare, has on the top a hollow like this Persian column.—*Anth. Hib.* I. p. 284.

pointed out as the place where the sacred flame was nourished. There is now no trace of fire, but it could hardly have existed after exposure to the weather for ages. Besides, the flame and its supplying fuel may not have come in contact with the stone, but have been placed in a metal vase, as is customary with the modern Persees, who fill to the brim a brazen vessel called the *Atish-dun*, with ashes, upon which they put the sacred fire. This vessel is set on a low stone pillar about eighteen inches high, the humble representative of the ancient lofty pillar-stone altar.*

Vast numbers of pillar-stones still remain in this kingdom, and may very frequently be observed near Cairns, where they may have been either the idol pillar to be worshipped, or perhaps simply the memorial of some departed chief or hero who had been buried in this sacred place, possibly with many pagan rites, and the sacrifice of numerous victims: bones, urns, and ornaments being often discovered under them.† In many instances the pillar occupies the centre of the stone circle, as at Temple Brian, county of Cork, where a cone-shaped white stone is so placed; while outside of the circle, at some yards distance, stands a taller pillar-stone, of a much coarser species: the ruins of a very ancient small church are situated very near this circle, and within the earthen mound which formerly enclosed the whole. It may be observed, that this monument at Temple Brian is, in the situation of its component parts, the exact counterpart of the circle at Darab-gird in ancient Iran.

The village of New Mills,‡ in the same county, possesses a circle now imperfect—only five of the twelve tall stones which

* Ouseley's *Travels in the East*, II. pp. 80—81.

† Beside every cairn, described by Pennant in his *Western Tour*, stands a pillar-stone, and sometimes a second one, on the top of the cairn.

‡ Smith's *History of Cork*, II. p. 418.—Townsend's *Survey*, p. 107.

originally composed it being upright; the centre stone is wanting here, but on the outside are a lofty pillar-stone and a crom-leac, an uncommon, but not quite singular union. Possibly this may have been caused by the crom-leac being often used in bloody sacrifices, while the pillar-stone was employed in the rites peculiar to the adoration of fire; the two ceremonies may have most commonly been separately performed. One of the most remarkable of these stones is to be seen in the little island of Innis-Murray, off the coast of Sligo,* where a conical pillar, called by the natives, the Clogh-Griane, or sunstone, rises from a square pedestal of masonry, surrounded at some feet distance by a low thick wall, to preserve it from profanation; close to this wall is an artificial mound of earth, irregular in shape, and containing small cells, vaulted with rude stones; some of these are perfect, having a hole in the top, and a small one in the side, apparently for the admission of air; many however have fallen in. In these cells, which bear a strong resemblance to the chambers described in Mount Olivet by Dr. Clarke, the frightful rites of initiation were probably carried on. Fronting the tumulus and the sun-stone, there is an area, where it is likely the worshippers assembled; the whole of which, with the pillar and tumulus, is enclosed by a wall ten feet high, and from five to ten feet thick, built of huge stones without mortar, but extremely well put together. The enclosure forms a sort of irregular ellipse, having two enclosures, but so narrow, that a man can hardly pass through: near one of them is a circular cell, not in the wall, but in a kind of enlargement of it which projects into the oval space. This pagan monument had been sanctified by St. Columba and St. Molaise, who each built a small chapel, one in the area before the

* Grose's *Antiq.* II.—*Collect. de Reb. Hib.* vi. p. 212.

cells, and one in the very tumulus itself; these chapels are built of lime and stone, but in a very rude manner.

In Malabar the deity of the tribe Malesir* is precisely such a stone, which stands in the middle of a small spot enclosed by a low wall; here every spring the people assemble, sacrifice goats, and present offerings. Another tribe in Mysore preserve the stone in a dark shrine, composed of stones and flags, forming a small chamber, about six feet square.† These existing customs afford a strong illustration of what had been the purposes of our remains of antiquity, also proving, either the universality of the same idolatrous practices, or that the stream of Irish superstition had flowed to us from the east.

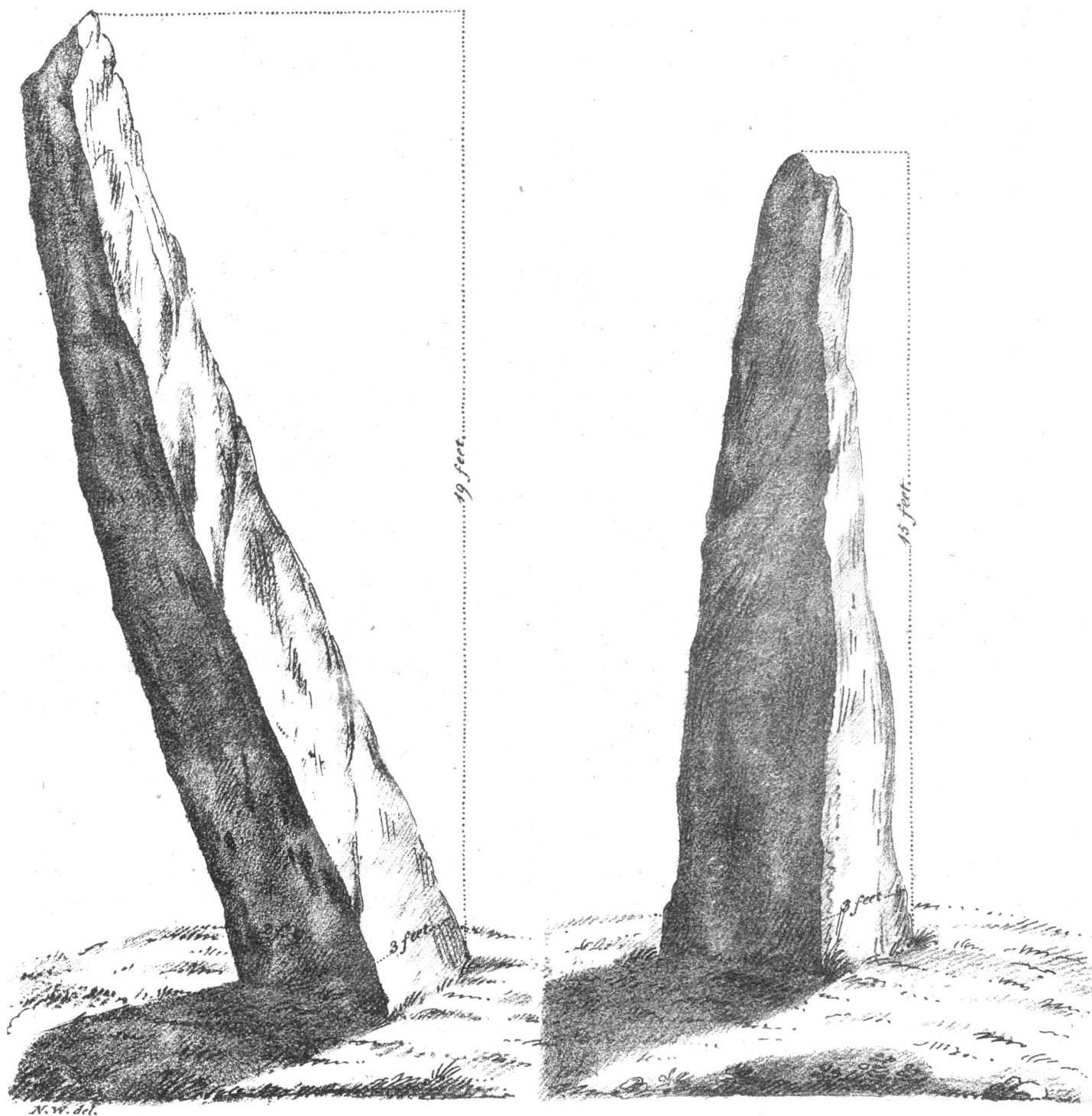
Many pillar-stones are of such great height and weight as would lead to the inference that our forefathers were possessed of greater mechanical powers, than perhaps the moderns are willing to give them credit for. In the county of Kerry, near Ardfert, on the summit of a large cairn, stands a Gullan-stone, or rude obelisk, twenty feet high; it is still perfectly erect.‡ Near Naas, in Kildare, is a pillar twenty feet high, by thirteen at the base; it tapers to a narrow apex, and now inclines a little to the east; there is no quarry of that sort of stone within several miles of the spot where it is erected; and it is estimated that fewer than forty oxen could not move it.§ How, in those ancient days, was it carried so great a distance?

* Might not the coincidence between the name of this Indian tribe and the saint of Innismurray, St. Molaise, lead to a presumption of connexion and confusion of names now lost in the "mist of antiquity."

† Buchanan's *Journey*, II. pp. 42—385.

‡ Transactions R. I. A. XIV. p. 112.

§ Survey of Kildare, p. 4.



The Pillar Stone of Punches Town.

Craddock's Town Pillar Stone.

County of Kildare.

There are various names applied to stones of this nature; in the counties of Cork and Kerry they are called Gowlan.* In the Isle of Arran Gullan,† possibly as in the Irish the D and G, are commutable letters, the same as Dallen-cloiche, explained by O'Brien to express any great stone erected as a monument, such as the three tall Gowlan stones near Macroom, county of Cork,‡ which are still shewn as the memorials of a famous battle fought there by Brian Borumh. Gullan may also be derived from *Gul*, lamentation—or *Guilim*, to weep. The stone of lamentation erected to commemorate the death of some favourite hero. So *Na Guil* is the Irish cry, or song of lamentation.§

They are also called the Crom-Dubh, the Black Crom, and Crom-Cruach,|| possibly from cru, red, bloody, in consequence of the sanguinary rites of worship. In some places they are said to be also called Bothel, the house of God,¶ which, it may be observed, is absolutely Hebrew, and forms a striking link of connexion between the ancient languages of Ireland and Palestine. The same close resemblance may be traced in the name of a pillar-stone between Carrick and Croghan, county of Roscommon, which is set up obliquely; it is called Clogh-Com, the bent stone,** words very near those in the Hebrew, which signify a rock standing or set up. They are still held in veneration in many parts of the country; and the

* Smith's Hist. Cork, II. p. 420.

† Trans. R. I. Academy, XIV. p. 110.

‡ Smith's Hist. I. p. 179.

§ Walker's Essay on the Irish Bards, Appendix, No. IX. One species of the Ceanan, or Irish cry, is called Gol. Ibid. p. 67.

|| History of the Isles of Arran, p. 111.

¶ Collect. de Reb. Hiber. II. p. 295.—Both, a house, a tent, a tabernacle.—O'Brien's Dictionary.

** Parochial Surveys, II. p. 322.

tradition that formerly the people collected round such stones for worship is curiously confirmed by the common expression in Irish, *of going to the stone*, for going to chapel.*

These idolatrous stones are conceived by many† to have given rise to the carved stone cross which is found in so many churchyards, and usually near the most ancient of our churches. By cutting down the uncouth stone to a slender cross, or where this was not feasible, by carving upon the pillar the figure of the cross, or bas relievos representing some part of Scripture history, these rude obelisks were consecrated: it appears to have been amongst the early Christian missionaries a frequent practice to retain, as it were, the popular veneration, but to change the motive by investing the object of it, with a Christian instead of a pagan character. Hence they were resorted to for Christian worship as they had been for heathen idolatry; even now, the habit is not quite extinct in some remote parts of the kingdom, as in the island of Cape Clear, close to the ruined church, which is built in the oldest style of mason-work, stands a pillar-stone, towards the top of which a cross has been cut, it is said by St. Kieran, who flourished about A. D. 540. This regenerated stone is held in great veneration, and the islanders, every spring gather round it for religious service to that saint upon the day of his festival.

Pillar stones and crosses so constantly are found in the near neighbourhood of the oldest and most rudely built churches, as to shew the probability that these small early structures were purposely placed in such situations as were previously regarded with superstitious respect, that they might share, or rather win from the pagan

* Ryland's History of Waterford, p. 265.

† Aestel and Pegge in the Archeologia. Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland. Pennant's Western Tour.

monuments the religious veneration of the people. Of those stones which have been sanctified by means of sculpture, one or two more examples, selected from the vast number that exist, will be sufficient to cite. In Camus church-yard there is a pillar-stone raised upon a base, consisting of two deep stones, the uppermost of which is ornamented by a projecting moulding all round: the pillar is divided by bands into four compartments, each of the three lowest containing three figures, but the upper one is plain.*

At the church of Dysart O'Dea a curious pillar now lies prostrate, on which the figure of St. Monologh is carved, holding his crozier; the head is cut upon a separate stone, so that it is removeable at pleasure; this pillar is highly revered, being called the cross of St. Monologh,† who possibly added the stone head to the original shaft, both to complete the figure, and to do away the pillar character.

This first step of giving shape to, or carving the original pillar-stone, was quickly followed by the erection of stone crosses of great size, and enriched with much beautiful sculpture. Crosses of this kind have been so often described that it would be a waste of time to dwell upon them farther than to mention, that the finest in Ireland are said to be those at Monaster Boice, county of Louth.‡ These are three in number, of which one, the cross of St. Boyne, is a single block of eighteen feet in height, upon which is carved in relief a representation yet distinctly traceable, of the history of the world from the temptation to the crucifixion. Those at Castle

* Survey of Londonderry, p. 483.

† Survey of Clare, p. 352.

‡ Archdall's Monasticon.—Wright's Louthiana, where they are well represented.—Sir R. C. Hoare's Tour in Ireland, p. 293.

Dermot, county Kildare,* are also very beautiful, and are remarkable for inscriptions in the character called Ogham; of these explanations have been attempted,† but none have hitherto proved satisfactory. At Kells,‡ and at Castle Kieran, both in Meath, and at Kilfenora, county of Clare, are crosses richly sculptured; while both Kilcullen and Clonmacnoise possess stone shafts, now much broken, but curiously carved in uncouth figures, which are apparently hieroglyphical § The above mentioned may suffice as examples, but many crosses not enumerated here still remain.

The multitude of tumuli of various sizes, so thickly scattered over the whole island, must attract the attention of every observant traveller: they differ in shape, in size, and in arrangement, but are indiscriminately called Danish Rathes or Forts—a title which seems to have been lightly bestowed, since they prevail full as much in those parts of the kingdom where the Danes never obtained any footing, as in those districts where they established a permanent sway. They abound elsewhere as much as in the neighbourhood of Waterford, or Wexford, or Limerick, the three Danish cities; or rather, are more abundant in those counties which the longest retained their forests, and continued to be the strong holds of the “Irishry.” Had they been derived from Denmark or Norway, they would probably have been found as commonly in those kingdoms as in Ireland. But though they do contain small sepulchral barrows, there is in either country only one tumulus of any magnitude, which is situated near Drontheim in Norway.||

* Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland.

† Essay on Druidism, and Letters by W. Beaufort, Collect. Reb. Hib. vol. II.

‡ Well figured in Cromwell's Excursions.

§ Aestel in Archeologia IX.—Ledwich's Antiquities.

|| Archeologia, II.—It has been suggested that the sounds of Dane and Dún bear so strong a

Some of the large entrenched inclosures may have been Danish as well as Irish, since they appear to have been merely fences thrown up to protect the camp; and it is not unlikely that during the four hundred years of repeated invasion, these foreigners may have adopted the plan, have raised some mounts, and occupied others, which they seized from the natives. But there can be no doubt, with the above exceptions, that they were customary erections of the Irish, because the Brehon laws have provided very minute regulations concerning them; and these laws were written and in force in Ireland centuries before the northerns invaded the country.* It is also a striking fact, that throughout the western part of Scotland and the Hebrides, all the works attributed to the Danes are of stone, none being of the nature of the earthen mound. And the circumstance of one among so many of these tumuli in the county of Kilkenny, being distinguished, as Lis-terling, the Lis or Fort of the Easterlings, means to point out, that their raising or possessing even one, was an uncommon occurrence. It may also be suggested, that the veneration with which these forts are regarded by the people, could hardly have sprung up for, or been yielded to the works of their hated oppressors.

The earth-works may be classed under different heads, as the Barrow, the Lis, the Dun, the Rath and the Moat.

The small sepulchral mount in England called Barrow,† but for which no appropriate and distinctive Irish name appears in the dic-

likeness to each other, that the error may easily have arisen from thence.—Philosophical Survey, p. 247.

* O'Reilly on the Brehon Laws. Transactions R. I. A. XIV.

† In the Hebrides they are called Barpinin.—The words Barp and Barrow are originally Norwegian. Macpherson on Antiquities of Scotland, p. 288.

tionaries,* are very numerous, like those in the sister country;† they are circular, finishing obtusely at top, and generally surrounded at bottom by a shallow trench: like those also they contain bones, and in some few instances complete skeletons; frequently urns of ashes, weapons, implements, and golden ornaments. It has been observed by a most competent judge,‡ that the golden relics are both more numerous, and much richer than what had been found in the Barrows of the south of England; and that the urns, though of much the same materials, are of better workmanship, more decorated, and of more graceful shape. Many of these sepulchral tumuli are situated near the circles of stones, or near pillar-stones; and in several instances a pillar-stone stands on the summit of the tumulus, a sacred monumental stone like the Stele of the ancient Greeks. In the usual contents of these sepulchres, as well as in their form and construction, there is to be observed a curious coincidence with those on the great Tartarian Steppes,§ while a distinction of character is marked by the number of idols of most distorted shapes which occur in those of Tartary; for no idol figure has ever been found in Ireland, nor do our early histories contain any account of, or allusion to that miserable species of idolatry.

The Caucasian tribe of the Tscherkesians, which in many points bear considerable resemblance to the Irish, still bury their chiefs in Barrows; with them they place silver goblets, arrows, armour, and all the presents that have been brought by friends and relations during the time the corpse was laid in state. At the funeral all the vassals assemble, and throw up over the body a barrow, of loftiness

* *Barr*, the summit or top of any thing; the end of things; also Death.—See Lhwyd, O'Reilly, and O'Brien's Dictionaries.

† Tour in Ireland, by Sir R. C. Hoare, p. 294.

‡ Ibid. p. 295.

§ Archeologia, II. p. 222.

proportionate to the consequence, and the number of friends and dependants of the chief.*

Some of these smaller earth-works contain within them small cells, of which some are empty, while others were the depositary of the urn, &c. ; in some there is no chamber, and the urns have been protected by a bed of round white stones carefully piled around the vase ; and in others by four flags, placed one on each side, with a fifth one laid over as a cover.† Small earth works containing caves are frequently situated in the vicinity of the larger Rathes ; possibly these were in some degree sacred, and appropriated for places of worship, as is the case in great part of India, where mounts, containing small chambers, are placed near the villages ; and on particular days the Bramins in procession carry their stone idols to the summit, and there perform their pouja, or worship.‡

In the church-yard of Dungiven, county of Londonderry, there is a very remarkable tumulus with a pillar-stone standing upon it ; and a second mount adjacent to it, when opened, was found to contain an earthen urn and some bones placed in the middle, and pro-

* Klaproth's Travels in the Caucasus, p. 337.

† A tomb of this sort was discovered some years back at Ardmulchan, in the county of Meath, by Mr. M., who, in levelling part of a hill, probably an artificial tumulus, found several skeletons placed without any regularity, and one Ciske Bhana, of size sufficient to contain a skeleton apparently of a person of uncommon stature. On one finger was a golden ring, underneath the head a silver ball, and beside it an urn, on which was an inscription in the ancient Irish character. It contained about twenty pieces of coin, mostly of Edward the Confessor. The ring on the finger, and there being no ashes in the urn, indicate that the ancient practice of burning the bodies of chieftains had at that time fallen into disuse, and the more modern mode of sepulture, by inhumation, been adopted.

‡ Origin of Pagan Idolatry, III. p. 237.—Sir William Ouseley, in his third volume, mentions that many of the tumuli are called *tapeh-Gaur*, or the Ghebres Mount—such earth works being generally considered at the high places of the Fire-worshippers.

Gaur-tepa, the high place of the Ghebres. Kerr Porter's Travels. v. II. p. 606.

tected by a pyramid of round white stones. At Kilconway, in the same county, the whole interior of a large circular mount is occupied by an artificial cave, in which, under a stone of considerable bulk, was found the usual urn of ashes, with its accompanying bones ; it is called Con's burying place.*

Some of these simple circular mounts were furnished with surrounding seats and benches of earth gradually ascending,† which were intended for assemblies of people to view the ceremonies enacted on the top, or to hear the promulgation of the laws. Both in North Britain and in Ireland the Brehons, or Judges, held their courts on green hills or knolls, around the sides of which the attendant multitude was seated on grassy banks.‡ In Scotland these hills are often called Mote-hills.§ Of this description is the "Hill of Pleas," in the Isle of Skie, where it is said the chief gave law and judgment to his people.¶ Such a hill of assembly is to be seen near Dromyn, in the county of Louth. And a still more remarkable example exists near Athy, county of Kildare, on the gentle declivity of the hill of Mullach Mastean, where is the Carmen, or enclosed place, where the states of Leinster assembled. Here may be traced the sixteen conical mounds on which the chiefs sat in time of council, forming a circle of sixty-eight feet in diameter ; and also the entrenchments within which the nobles encamped adjacent to the scene of debate. This spot looks down upon the pagan remains near Bal-

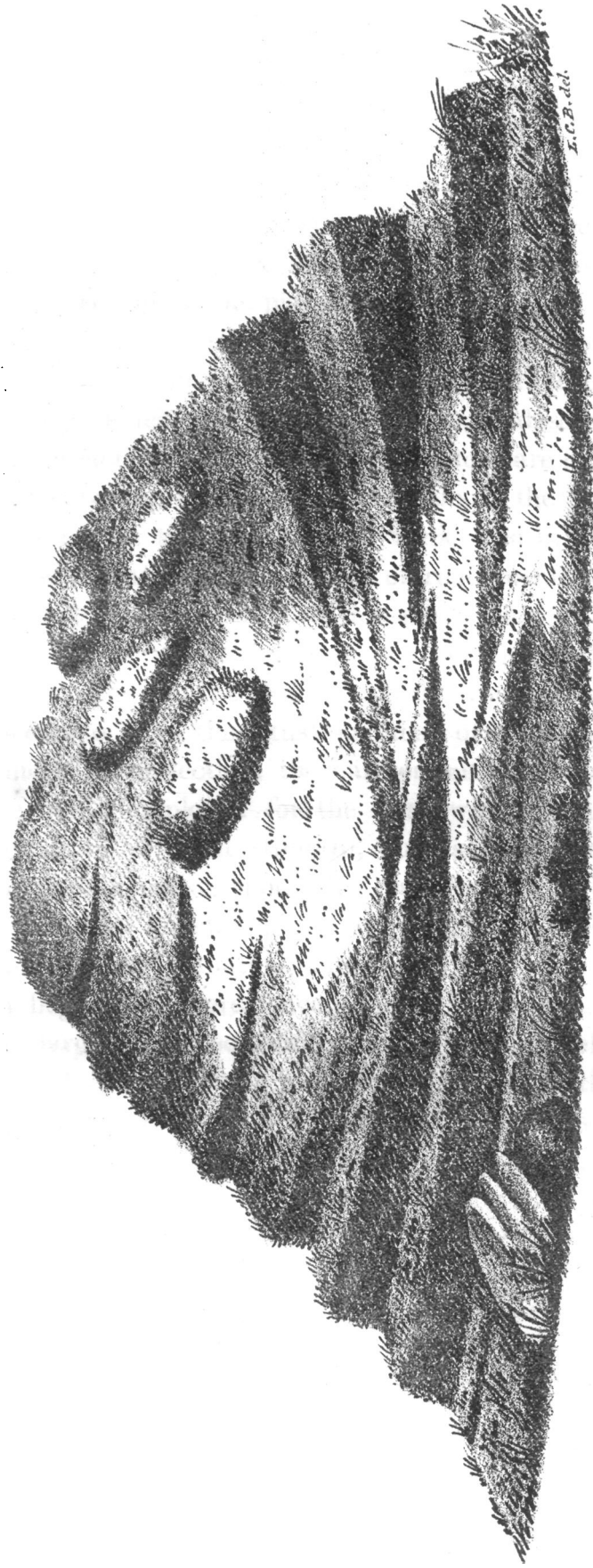
* Survey of Londonderry, p. 497.

† Parochial Surveys, I. p. 254.

‡ Ibid. I. p. 254.—In the Scottish Highlands they call them Mute-hills—*i. e.* word hills, or places for deliberation.—Macpherson's Antiq. of Scotland, p. 169.

§ Spencer says they were anciently called Folk-motes, that is, a place for people "to meet and talk of any thing concerning parties and townships"—and that it is a Saxon-name, probably introduced by the English invaders.—View, p. 127.

¶ Pennant's Western Tour, p. 351.—Littleton's Hist. Hen. II. vol. iii. p. 25.



The Mont of Castletown Kilberry,

County of Meath.

tinglass, Beal-tien-glas, a name said to mean the pure fire of Beal, or Bel, and which was one of the greatest seats of this worship.* The western range of the Wicklow mountains take their name of Slieb-carmen, from this remarkable place.

The Lis, or Lios, signifies a strong house, or habitation, or fortified palace.† These artificial hills are generally much larger than the barrow before mentioned, are often very high, and sometimes not circular, but approaching to an ellipse;‡ their tops are flat, with an earthen bank thrown up around the little plain on the summit; entrance places are left in this surrounding bank, and in some instances they have been fenced with a second entrenchment near the base. There is much variety in them as to size; some containing two or three acres, others only an area sufficient for the dwelling of a single family. The Lis and the Dun are nearly synonymous; the chief difference seems to be in the situation; that of the Lis varying, and in the mode of protection, the earthen entrenchment and the wattle hedge being employed for the Lis; while the Dun is fenced with thick walls of great strength, and is also invariably placed upon a lofty commanding spot, often on a rock.

The Dun or Doon—a fortified place of strength.§ The Dun was always in an elevated situation, often guarding passes over rivers or through bogs; they were fenced round the top by a broad wall, built of very large stones, sometimes almost rocks, rudely, but very solidly put together; they were strongly entrenched with more than one line of circumvallation, frequently with deep fosses and covered ways; and a few of them had a wet ditch, with the power

* Survey of Kildare, p. 3.—Seward's Topographical Dict.—Phil. Survey, p. 234.

† O'Brien's Dict.

‡ Parochial Surveys, I. p. 254.

§ O'Brien's Dict.

of turning water into it. The fort of Dundermot, county of Antrim, is an oval of sixty feet by thirty, and perfectly level on the top; this is enclosed by a very deep fosse, and below this fosse is another, into which the river Maine runs in flood time. This Dun is ascended by a steep winding path.*

In the same neighbourhood stands Dun-Baught, on a high rocky hill, nearly inaccessible; this was approached by two hollow ways in opposite directions, and was surrounded by a deep ditch; upon the summit was a space ninety by eighty feet in area, and enclosed by a lofty entrenchment fifty-feet high, forming it into an inner fort; between this entrenchment and the fosse it had a platform all around, sixty-five feet broad, furnished on opposite sides with two entrances from the fosse; the two hollow ways meet together in the fosse, and at their junction is the mouth of a cave, which has a communication with the inner fort at top; on the central level vestiges of some small enclosures are still visible.†

That much care was taken to render these fortresses secure by various means, is evinced in the construction of Dun-Gorkin, in the county of Londonderry, the fort of famine; which name it may have received from having held out till reduced by starvation. The tumulus is at the base an hundred and eighty-six feet by an hundred and twenty-nine; the top is a circle of forty-five feet diameter, surrounded by a bank and fosse; the whole is encircled by a very deep ditch, eighty-four feet wide, which is crossed by a causeway constructed of piles, surmounted by cross beams, and these again are covered by transverse timbers. A very large and strong gate, framed of oak, has been buried opposite to this causeway; and

* Parochial Surveys, I. 251.

† Ibid. These Duns cannot but call to mind the hill fortresses of India.

within the fortification have been dug up hatchets of basalt, spear heads of grey granite, arrows of flint, and querns made of free-stone.*

From these examples it is evident that the Dun was a military fortification, and that in its construction some engineering skill was displayed.

The Rath signifies the village or settlement.† In the Brehon laws, the Rathes are distinguished as being of various ranks, and having possessions of different values attached to them; each Rath, or village, was obliged by these laws to contribute to the support of the chief, in proportion to the extent of land which it occupied. The chiefs and princes held distinct ranks, and had possessions varying in value, and the laws which regulated the contributions are very curious and very minute.

Some raths are small and round, but flat on the top, where the houses were erected. Some are very large, capable of containing several dwellings. Among these large raths tradition points out some as having been royal, and others as the residences of the chiefs of clans or septs. So in Kildare, Rath-ais-cael, commonly called Rathescull, is shewn as the dwelling of the ancient chief Mac Kelly.‡ And the people consider the uncommonly large rath at Ceanchora on the Shannon, near Killaloe, as the palace of the great Brian Borumbh.§

On the western side of the city of Armagh there is a rath of extraordinary size, now called the Navan Hill, which tradition and history agree in asserting to be the site of the palace of Evan Macha,

* Survey of Londonderry, p. 499.

† O'Brien's Dictionary.—O'Reilly on Brehon Law. Trans. R. I. A., xiv. p. 208.

‡ Survey of Kildare, Introduction, p. 11.

§ Survey of Clare, p. 115.

built before the Christian era by Cimbaoth, king of Ireland. It is mentioned by St. Fiech, who wrote in the sixth century, and O'Flaherty *says some of the ruins were to be seen in his time. The Navan rath is encompassed by a fosse, which takes an elliptical course, enclosing eleven acres; within this boundary are two small moats, probably forts for the protection of the royal residence. Close adjoining appears a mound of a large size, straight, with a return at right angles at either end; this always receives the designation of the king's stables.†

In the neighbourhood of the large raths, are often several of small dimensions; these latter are supposed to have been inhabited by the families composing the sept, as the greater ones were by the king or chief and his immediate retainers. A rath situated near the foot of the hill of Mullagh Creevagh affords a good instance of a chief's rath with its dependencies. Its shape and arrangements may be judged of from the slight accompanying map.

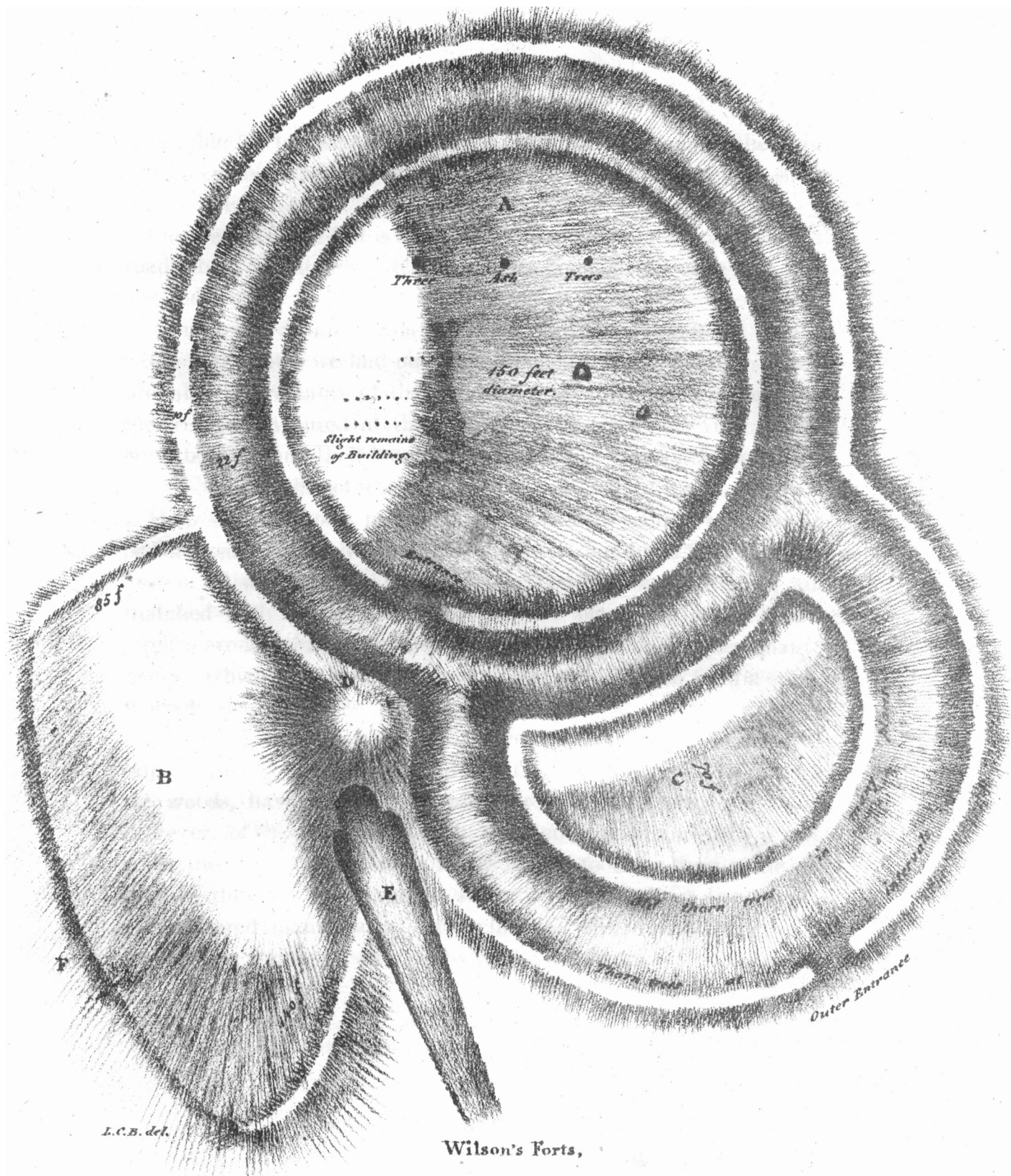
A, encompassed by a bank five feet high, is the highest division, and was probably the residence of the chief, as the entrance to it was protected by a small moat D, which commanded the fosse, or covered way, in three directions.

C was, it is likely, the abode of the retainers, and defended the outer entrance. The fosse surrounding A and C, is twenty-two feet wide at top, six at bottom, and twenty feet deep: all round on the sides of the banks next to it still remain a vast number of very old twisted thorn treess. B is a smooth hanging level, having no fosse, and a bank only at each end, while the front, F, shews merely a perpendicular face, ten feet down to the field.

E appears a sort of road-way, rudely walled on each side, and it

* O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, vol. I.

† Stewart's *History of Armagh*, p. 578.



Wilson's Forts,
On the Hill of Mullagh Creevagh in the Co. of Westmeath.

is possible led to a small artificial cave under the moat: the earth has fallen so as to conceal the termination, but the regular shape excites the idea.

On the top of the hill is a small round tumulus, to which a straight road, about two hundred feet long, and bounded on each side by a low wall, leads.

At no great distance from it is a large druidical stone.

On many raths we find circles of crooked stunted hawthorn trees; probably the remains of the wattle fences which Spencer describes the Irish to have used at the time when he wrote his view of Ireland, both around their houses,* and as a sort of fortification to their strong-holds in the forests.

Both these customs prevail in the Caucasus; the Tscherkessian or Circassian tribes choose similar situations, and build their dwelling houses of wattle work, well plastered within and without, and thatched with straw; several houses are placed so as to form a circle; around this, at about twenty paces distance, they plant a hedge, which they plash or weave together so as to form a strong fence.†

Among the Abassian tribes the dwellings are constructed in the same manner, but not collected in villages; they stand detached in the woods, having a court or open area before them, the whole, however, of the premises of each tenement is surrounded by a stout wattle hedge: at nightfall it is customary to drive their cattle and herds within this enclosure for security. Throughout the country are scattered many wattle entrenchments with double hedges, intended only for the security of the flocks and herds, which are driven

* See also on Tartarian Tumuli. *Archeologia*, II. p. 224.

† Klaproth's *Travels in the Caucasus*, p. 248.

into them at night, when the herdsmen close the gateway, Irish fashion, by placing across it one of the two wheeled cars of the country.*

There are also small earth-works forming chains of connexion for miles, these are distinguished as moats; this name is derived from an Irish word of double meaning, expressing both a place of defence and of communication by signal.† These are so well disposed that a signal fire, lighted on any one, or the sound of the famous Irish brazen trumpet, could be almost instantly repeated forwards to the head rath; this arrangement is obvious in many places, as from the great Lis of Lismore to Dungarvon on the one side, and to the mountains on the other.‡ From the sea coast south east of the city of Cork, a distance of more than seven miles, the chain of moats can be traced to the city;§ while on the other side of the town, another chain reaches from it to the high hill of Cashel, near Bandon, which had probably been used as a head rath, as on the top of it there are the remains of a small earth-work, and of several lines of surrounding entrenchments.

In Londonderry also, a connected chain of moats, extends on either side of the river Roe, until it falls into the Owen Keugh.||

The King's County supplies a remarkable example of a head rath and its dependant moats; the large rath of Ballykillen, which is well defended with strong works, and very difficult of access, is at the head of a chain of moats, which extend through all that country, each moat commanding a Togher, or bog-pass. Ballykillen

* Klaproth's Travels in the Caucasus, pp. 323—330.

† Parochial Surveys, I. p. 252.

‡ Smith's History of Waterford, p. 353.

§ Parochial Surveys, III. p. 468.

|| Ibid. I. p. 302.

probably belonged to some chief of rank, as many curiosities were found in the cave underneath, such as an ancient candlestick, and a knife with a curious handle, in which was enclosed a scent box of musk that still retained its perfume.*

This arrangement has also been observed to take place in the Barrows of England, so much so as to have excited considerable doubts in Stackhouse, respecting the sepulchral object of all barrows; he was persuaded that many were raised merely for watch stations.

A great number of the raths contain caves, with narrow passages leading to them; in some of these communicating apparently with the village above, it was customary to keep stores and corn. From Tacitus we learn that the Germans had similar repositories for provisions; while Cæsar says, that the Gauls placed their consecrated spoils in such caves, raising a mound of earth over them. Both practices may have obtained in Ireland. The custom of preserving corn in such subterranean chambers may also have been brought with the settlers from the east, as both in Persia and India this mode is commonly practised. Dr. Buchanan's description of the cave made for keeping Paddy or Rice in the husk,† is precisely that of a small artificial cavern, traditionally called the granary, on the hill of Rath-Bran, in the county of Meath: a hill venerated by all the country folk, for the great stone under whose shelter Fingal, and his faithful wolf-dog Bran, rested, when in pursuit of a giant he walked one morning from Kildare to the top of Slieb Gullen.‡

* Survey of King's County, p. 126.

† Journey in Mysore, Malabar, &c.

‡ About thirteen miles from the city of Sari, in Persia, a mount called the Takht-i-Rustam, the throne or seat of Rustam, is pointed out. On it is a large stone, where tradition says that Rustam once rested and took a hurried breakfast, in his chase of the Div-i-sepid, or white giant, to the mountains.—Ouseley's Travels in the East, III. p. 269.

There are also other structures, which do not come precisely under any of the foregoing heads, yet which deserve mention, both from being in themselves remarkable, and from their intimate connection with the present subject.

The circular enclosure called the Giant's-ring near Drumboe, in the county of Down, the encompassing bank of which measures a third of a mile, and environs a level area of five acres, is one of these; in the centre stands a gigantic crom-leac, and the surrounding mound is raised to so great a height, that to a person standing at the altar, only the sky and the rampart are visible; the base of this rampart is very broad, the outside sloping abruptly finishes in a flat space, of sufficient breadth to admit of two persons riding abreast: the declivity inwards is gentle, and well suited for spectators to sit around, as in an amphitheatre, to view the sacrifice and rites performing in the centre.*

The county of Wicklow exhibits on the summit of the mountain Slieb-Gadoe, which is two thousand feet in height, another remarkable enclosure; this is of stone, an hundred and seventeen feet long by an hundred and one; the surrounding wall is twelve feet high, of great thickness, and formed of large rough stones. Within this circuit is a holy well, much frequented by pilgrims: this clear and beautiful spring, though situated within two feet of the highest point of the mountain, is said to flow at all times of the year. There is also the ruin of a small, very ancient church, which may be considered a strong evidence that in former times this spot was the scene of idolatrous rites; the early missionaries having purposely selected such for the site of churches, thereby sanctifying to Christian worship the very theatres of heathenism.†

* Survey of Down, p. 27. 3.—Reid's Tour, p. 187.—Harris's History of Down, p. 200.

† Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, p. 339.—Cordiner's Scenes in Scotland, where he gives

Such another enclosure stands on the top of Cahir-Curree mountain, county of Kerry, built of massive stones: the stones are very rugged and of great size, most of them being from eight to ten feet square.* Dr. Smith conjectures it to have been a monument of some great action, or a sepulchral trophy; but it seems more consistent with the other remains of antiquity, to invest it with a religious character, since the summit of hills and mountains were favourite situations for pagan worship, and more especially for that of the sun.†

At Killymore, county of Tyrone, is a lofty rath, on whose top a strong rude wall surrounds an area of ninety-nine feet in diameter; on this is a parapet six feet high; round the inside of this wall are projecting stones, which rising to the top in oblique directions form a kind of rough staircases.‡ This structure brings immediately to mind the Staig-fort so lately described by Mr. Bland;§ it seems, though much coarser, to have been built with the same object: the area contained within the wall is nearly equal, and perhaps a closer description of the northern fort might bring to view other particulars of resemblance.

An erection of precisely the same nature as the Staig-fort has in the course of the summer of 1826 been visited and measured by an accurate observer;|| according to his description it is not in so good

gives a view of a very ancient church placed within a stone circle.—Clarke's *Travels in Scandinavia*, ix. p. 220, oct. edition.—Gough's *Camden*.—The *Beauties of Wicklow*, p. 154.—In *Caernarvonshire* the monument of Pen-y-dinas is extremely like this; Gough and Pownal pronounce it a druidical sun temple.—Camden's *Brit.* II. p. 557.

* Smith's *History of Kerry*, p. 156.

† Herod. *Clio.* p. 131.

‡ *Parochial Surveys*, I. p. 118.

§ *Transactions R. I. A.* xiv.

|| Captain Beaufort, *R. N.*

a state of preservation as the latter, while it also varies from it in some particulars.

Cahir-Gall,* as the peasants call this edifice, is somewhat larger than the Staigs, which is eighty-eight by eighty-nine feet, being a circle of ninety-four feet in diameter: the most perfect part of the surrounding wall is thirteen feet high, but is irregular as if broken. At top it is twelve feet broad, and seventeen feet six inches at bottom; the outer face of the wall batters regularly in the proportion of nine inches in six feet; and round the inside are twelve double pair of steps, arranged in the same crossing mode as at the Staigs; both the upper and lower tiers of steps are two feet broad. The wall is without cement, but closely and well laid, being built through the whole thickness with solid work of flat stones. The entrance was on the south side, but from the broken down state of this part of the wall, its exact width cannot be ascertained; outside of this breach are indistinct remains of concentric curves or steps up to it. There is no appearance of cells in any part of the wall.

In the middle of the area is a circular building of thirty feet in diameter, the wall of which is full five feet six inches thick, but is not nearly so well put together as the great wall of circumference, with which it scarcely appears to be contemporary, though evidently very ancient; about twenty-feet in height may remain, but in a ruinous state, and without any appearance of having been intended

* The white city, as translated by the country people in that neighbourhood. But possibly the original name was *Caer*, which in Gaelic signifies an *oracle*, or a *place of address*. Garden on Circular monuments. *Archeo.* I. p. 315. This is the more probable, as Cahir-curree is placed upon a mountain top, where no city ever was, or indeed could have been placed. This name has also been three times applied to similar antiquities by Dr. Smith in his *History of Kerry*. The appellation *Caer*, an oracle, so repeated, is rational; that of *Cahir* (which is pronounced as if no *h* were in the word) is certainly not so. *Gall* is a rock or stone—*Caer-gall*, perhaps the stone of the oracle.

for any domestic purpose : there are in this wall several quincunx rows of small holes like loop-holes.

Of this building it may be observed, that supposing it to be of equal antiquity with the outer wall, it may possibly have been some sort of temple, since that of Juggernaut is described to resemble an immense cylinder fifty-feet in height. There also exist in Persia two buildings which, though differing somewhat in shape, are yet very analogous to this. One is near Persepolis among the tombs, and is by the people called the Caabah of Zeratusht,* and by the guides the Kennai Khanèh, or trumpet station. It is about thirty feet high, and twenty-three feet square, built in the most substantial manner, and ornameuted from top to bottom by loop-holes on every side, which are placed in rows ; these are very deep sunk into the stone-work, but do not go through. The other building, except in being of greater height, and not in so perfect preservation, is exactly similar ; it stands near an ancient tomb called Madre-i-Suleiman.

These fabricks may have been fire houses, or trumpet-towers, for calling the people to public worship. So also may have been the singular building of Cahir-Gal. It may also have been a work of later times, fabricated of some of the debris of the original structure, and erected as a place of defence.

The situation is very similar to that of the Staigs ; a gentle declivity towards the south, down to the sea shore, at about half a mile distance ; on the west side a streamlet, on the north and east the ground rises to the mountain of Cloghan Linaghan. Between Cahir-Gal and the sea is a small patch of bog, which is separated from the wall by a hollow, something resembling a fosse, but there

* The cube of Zoroaster.—Ouseley's Travels in the East, II. pp 299—435.

is no ditch immediately surrounding the wall, the ground being very rough and rocky.

A detailed account of the Staigs, being in so late a volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy,* it would be useless to repeat that description here; it will therefore be a more advisable course to advert at once to the various conjectures which have been made concerning the purpose for which the Staig-fort was erected.

General Vallancey was of opinion that it was a Phenician amphitheatre.† On this Mr. Bland observes, that the cells are too small to admit of wild beasts, and that there does not appear to have been any contrivance for closing the entrance. It may be added, that we have no account of such shows occurring in this country, or among those tribes from whom we claim descent; neither was it likely that places of exhibition should have been seated in these remote parts of the island, and in no others.

It has been regarded by others as a place of defence; and its strength, from any direct or close attack, would have been of some avail, surrounded as it was by a wide and deep fosse; but its utmost height is so moderate, and it is commanded so closely by the adjacent mountains, as to have its interior exposed to the arrows of an enemy; it is to be also observed, that it does not appear to have had any protecting parapet or breast work.

Mr. Bland thinks it was a sort of depot for the goods belonging to some foreign colony which came in search of ore. But for this purpose the vast thickness of the walls, and the regularity and pe-

* Vol. XIV.

† The walls of the Staig-fort are constructed in the manner called Pelasgic; that is, of large uneven stones, with the interstices filled so closely with small pieces as to give the whole the firmness of a rock.

culiar construction of the stairs do not appear at all adapted, nor would an unprotected entrance have been suitable.

It has been considered by Mr. Nimmo as an observatory, but the same objections apply to this as to the last conjecture. Where so many conjectures have been made, another may allowably be suggested.

It might have been an open temple or amphitheatre, not for viewing the battles of wild beasts, but for an assembled multitude to behold the sacred rites and sacrifices offered to the meridian Sun. In this case the steps would have enabled the spectators to gain with ease the broad flat top of the wall, on which they might either stand or sit to behold the ceremonies. The two cells might be looked upon as places to keep sacred utensils or instruments of sacrifice, or to receive the initiated. In the centre there might have stood an altar, as in the Giant's ring; or a sun-stone, as at Innis-Murray, or both; and perhaps were the ground to be examined something of the kind might be discovered which would throw light on this curious piece of antiquity.

The vast number of small caves, with connecting passages excavated in the neighbouring mountains, rather confirm this idea, as they prevail in every one of the seats of Baal's worship, hewn either in natural elevations, or formed in artificial high places. To this the name appears to agree, since among the explanations of Staig-an-air, the appellation by which it is known to the country people, we find that it may be Stig-an-air, a corrupted pronunciation of Stig-an-athair, (the th silent,) the house of the Father, or the Father's house, that is, a temple. Now Bel, or the Sun, was in ancient mythology constantly called the Great Father, and worshipped as the Creator, or rather as the producer of all things.* Strabo also

* Maurice's Ind. Antiq.

Origin of Pagan Idolatry.

affords a strong confirmation of these ideas by the account which he gives of the Persian Pyratheion, which was, he says, a vast enclosed space, in the centre of which stood the altar; upon this the Magi collected a large quantity of ashes, and in them preserved the Azer, or sacred fire, unextinguished. Zonares speaks of the sacred enclosures in which fire was worshipped by the people. And most of the terms used by the Greek writers imply a spacious enclosed piece of consecrated ground, with which description all the oriental MSS. agree. The words which Strabo employed are thought by Gail, to be synonymous to *enceinte sacrée*, a sacred boundary.* And accordingly among the Persian remains of antiquity, several of those monuments still pointed out as fire altars, are surrounded by broad walls formed of unhewn stones. Thus in Persia do we find counterparts of the most remarkable antiquities existing in Ireland.

Of the same nature with the above fabrics, is a very extraordinary structure remaining in the greater Isle of Arran, off Galway Bay, which has been incorrectly described by Dr. Ledwich in his *Antiquities of Ireland*, and which Mr. O'Flaherty, in his *History of the Isles*,† only mentions as the Dun or Fort of the chief Aengus. It is certainly now called Dun-Aengus. But having obtained an authentic account of it as it now stands, it seems, although differing in many particulars, yet to bear a sufficient resemblance to the Stigan-air, to corroborate the foregoing conjectures. Dun Aengus stands upon the very edge of a perpendicular cliff, two hundred and fifty feet above the sea, towards which there is no fence; it is of a horse-shoe shape, and composed of three concentric walls, put

* Ouseley's *Travels in the East*, I. pp. 129—130.—And the Greek authors there cited.

† *Transactions R. I. A.* XIV.

together in the rudest manner : the outer one is eighteen hundred and sixty-eight feet in length. There is a space of three hundred and twenty feet in breadth between this and the second wall, which is thirteen feet high by sixteen broad below, and eight at the top ; it is formed of sharp irregular stones, almost like *cheveau de freize*, which present a sloping face on both sides ; its whole length is a thousand and eighty feet. A distance of two hundred and forty feet separates this from the third and inmost wall, which is nineteen feet six inches high, fifteen feet thick at bottom, and eleven at the top.

The space enclosed by this inner boundary is an hundred and fifty one feet to the edge of the cliff, and across an hundred and thirty-two feet ; in the middle of the wall is a narrow entrance, opposite to which, and in the centre of the chord, is a large low altar, placed immediately upon the edge of the cliff ; this great stone is two feet six inches high, thirty-nine feet long, and thirty-three broad. In each of the two outer walls there is a narrow entrance, but obliquely placed, not in a direct line with the altar, as the inner entrance. Here this gigantic altar-stone at once explains the object of the whole structure to have been sacrifice ;* and a more awfully sublime place of worship can scarcely be imagined—the glorious sun above, the boundless ocean below.

Some illustration of this may be derived from the fact, that the Ceylonese Gentoos assemble annually at Swamy rock, a cliff which rises perpendicularly from the sea to a height of three hundred feet, to perform sacrifice ; here close to the edge of this dreadful preci-

* On the mountains of Elwund and Morgaub, in Persia, are large flat stone altars to the sun. They are frequent on rocky eminences, and are always pointed out as the *Ghebre Altars* to the Sun. The sun altars are invariably flat-stones.—Ker Porter's Travels, vol. II. pp. 116—318.

pice stands the aged priest, who is described to go through the ceremonies with the most perfect coolness; his long white beard, his simple dress, and the surrounding groups of devotees, altogether presenting a patriarchal picture.*

It is also worthy of observation, that on the lofty Capharean promontory of Mont Ocha, in the island of Eubœa, there are the remains of a low Greek temple, of the most ancient and peculiar construction, with battering sides, strongly resembling one of the ancient cairn temples in its front elevation, and, like them, roofed with large flag stones. This temple, we gather from Pausanius, was sacred to Neptune, and the favourite place of sacrifice to him.†

There is no tradition now existing in the Isles of Arran concerning this curious antiquity, a circumstance much to be regretted, since tradition discreetly employed may be looked upon as a handmaid to history, frequently pointing out the source whence truth may be derived.

It has been contended by some antiquarians that there were no lime and stone buildings in Ireland before the period of the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169. Others founding their assertions on a mistaken passage‡ in St. Bernard's Life of Malachy O'Morgair, Primate of Ireland, have said, that the first building with lime cement was erected by Malachy in 1145, although he had rebuilt the cathedral of Down ten years earlier. But neither of these opinions can be correct, because Giraldus Cambrensis speaks of lofty ecclesiastical towers as being the fashion of the country when he landed in 1170. To be distinguished as the fashion of a coun-

* Christian Examiner, No. 13, p. 38.

† Walpole's Collect. II. p. 389.

‡ History of Armagh, p. 133.

try, a custom must have been generally prevalent, which could hardly have taken place in the short period of thirty-six years, between 1134, when the primate is supposed to have first introduced the art to the ignorant Irish, and 1170, when Giraldus found lofty stone towers to be customary. Besides the Danes and Ostmen had, many years previous to the arrival of the English, established such a footing as to have built towns and surrounded them with strong walls fortified by towers.*

It may also reasonably be argued, that if the art of masonry was unknown to a country, the written laws of that country would not be likely to give minute directions regarding the various modes of building, as did the *Brehon Law*; nor would there be privileges and rewards granted to those who were skilled in the art, as it appears from the *Seanchus Bheg*, a very ancient law tract, was the fact.† The *old* Irish language possesses distinct names for the different species of houses and modes of building with stone, which could not have been the case if no such style of house were known.

Ptolomy, in speaking of Ireland, names several cities; civilization must therefore, to a certain degree, have been advanced at that time; and the probability is, that there were some stone and lime edifices in them, although the great bulk of the dwelling-houses were constructed of mud-wall, or plastered wattle, or smoothed timber, or split oak, thatched with reeds, as Bede says was the manner of the Scots, that is, the Irish. That this was the case is likely from the circumstance, that in 964, Edgar, who with a powerful fleet had invaded and ravaged a great part of Ireland, terms

* Whitelaw's History of Dublin, I. p. 66. et seq.—History of Armagh, pp. 585—587.

† Essay on the Brehon Law, Trans. R. I. Academy, XIV. p. 199.

Dublin a *noble city*,* an epithet which his Majesty would scarcely have bestowed upon a village consisting solely of hurdle cabins; and also, because this fashion of dwellings continued to be customary, not only in Ireland, but in England,† even so late as the time of Elizabeth, when Holingshed laments the degenerate effeminacy of his countrymen, since the laying aside of willow-houses had become a prevalent fashion. Nor is the silence of the early English historians conclusive that there were no stone edifices in Dublin when the Anglo-Normans seized it. That silence would rather imply, that the buildings and the appearance of the city were not altogether dissimilar from what they were accustomed to in Britain.‡ Christ Church cathedral appears from Ware§ to have been built a hundred years before Strongbow's invasion by Sitricus the Dane, petty king of Dublin. This mixture of wattle and timber dwelling houses, with stone and lime churches, was one to which they were habituated, and therefore the lofty round tower, as the peculiar building of the country, is alone mentioned.

When the Anglo-Romans established themselves in Ireland, they built stone dwelling-houses, or rather small castles, in which they could defend themselves, and the country quickly became studded over with the strong holds of the English. The Irish chieftains very tardily adopted the fashion of their invaders, disliking it both from the circumstance of its origin, and from its being opposed to

* Whitelaw's *History of Dublin*, I. p. 46.—Littleton's *History of Henry II.* v. III. p. 28.

† It is evident from the description given by Arnulphus de Montgomery of Pembroke Castle, built about the same period, that stone buildings were then uncommon in England.—*Philosophical Survey*, p. 53.

‡ Littleton's *History of Henry II.* v. II. p. 340, houses of stone in London were at this time rather rare.—Hallam on the *Middle Ages*, iii. p. 420.

§ Ware's *Antiquities*, p. 134.

their own previous habits. Some few, erected towers or small castles of defence, but the great bulk of the people held in contempt the customs of oppressors whom they hated, and adhered to their national customs. Hence, the very small remains of domestic architectural antiquity; a circumstance which has so often been brought forward as a proof of the barbarity of the Irish. But in this adherence to old customs, they persevered even in Queen Elizabeth's reign, when she had laws enacted compelling them to build bawns, or small castles of defence, and laying down various rules for their arrangement, and the distribution of lands according to their size. But still the chiefs felt, and boldly expressed the same dislike of the Norman Castles, their thick walls, and narrow windows, comparing them to gloomy prisons, the dwellings of the cowardly, which the Saxons had so strongly evinced in England.

Such is the feeling now existing among the Cognate Colchial tribes of Caucasus, where the princes and nobles esteem it so disgraceful to live within solid walls, that a fortress or a stone wall dwelling-house would brand the possessor with the character of a coward, who was incapable of defending a habitation of the usual construction:* this is most commonly of wattle, plastered within and without, sometimes also of smooth planks, and often of mud. These are curious coincidences in the continuing habits of one branch, and the recorded habits of another branch from the same parent stock; coincidences which strongly bear out the claim of the Irish to Oriental origin, and subsequent Oriental connexion. These tribes, though surrounded by Tartar and Lesgae hordes, preserve their blood unmixed, proudly preferring a claim to Median descent, which is in great measure confirmed by the circumstance that

* Klaproth's Travels in the Caucasus, p. 336.

half their language is composed of Median words. They call their country Ironistan, and themselves *Ir* and *Iron*.*

That before the invasions of the Danes we had lime and stone buildings is evident, from those still existing remains of the churches of Columba, the Culdees, and some even of those erected by their predecessors. And there is also standing in the county of Londonderry, between the city of Derry and Faughan, the ruins of the palace of Niel Cabrè, who was king of Ireland, A. D. 832. This palace was famous for the councils and convocations held there, and was one of the three royal palaces of Ulster.† It is also to be observed, that no round tower has been built since the landing of the English; that previously, during the tyranny of the Danes, the erection of only one is mentioned, and that is attributed to an Irish prince; had they been introduced along with Christianity, they would certainly have been mentioned, as the ancient annals are minute in recording the foundations and buildings of several of the early Christian teachers. Would not the monkish writers too, have been pleased to draw attention towards them? But on the contrary, they leave them in the same obvious silence as they do cairns, and pillars, and other pagan remains; the presumption therefore is, that they are of an earlier date than any of the ecclesiastical remains. Yet, when the tower of Downpatrick was pulled down, the foundations of part of a building larger than the an-

* Klaproth's Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia, p. 37.—The Georgian part of the Caucasus is called *Hiberia* by John de Plano Carpini, who visited the country in 1225.—Ibid. p. 154.

In the Pehlivi inscriptions on some ancient coins, Persia is called *Airan*. Porter's Travels, vol. II. p. 127.

† Survey of Londonderry, p. 156.

cient cathedral, and of excellent workmanship, were found underneath it.*

Some writers† have imagined that masonry was introduced either by wandering Greeks, about the close of the seventh century, or by the freemasons, brought to Ireland by some of our bishops who had travelled to Greece and Palestine, and had there acquired a taste for the degraded Grecian style prevalent in the lower Roman empire during the seventh and eighth centuries ; and that hence arose the style of the early buildings, such as Cormac's Chapel at Cashel. But in the details of this curious building nothing Grecian appears ; the short thick columns, the heavy capitals, the semicircular arch, and the chevron mouldings, all belong to the Saxon or Norman schools, which have been shewn to be in all essentials the same,‡ deriving from the Roman style, and not partaking of the over-ornamented fretted manner apparent in the buildings of the Empress Helena, and those of the eastern empire, from the time of Constantine.

In the great number of churches and monastic establishments founded by St. Declan, St. Fechan, St. Patrick, St. Columba, and other early Christian teachers, it can scarcely be doubted but that some were built of more durable materials than wattle or timber ; and accordingly we find mention in Ware of St. Kienan's lime and stone church, built in the fifth century ;§ the Irish were therefore in advance of the English, who did not adopt the use of lime and stone until A. D. 675, according to Bede and William of Malms-

* Memoir of a Map of Ireland, by Dr. Beaufort, p. 141.

† Dr. Ledwich.—And in the *Anthologia Hibernica*, II. p. 193.

‡ Britten's *Architectural Antiquities*, v. —Turner's *Architectural Tour of Normandy*, II. p. 176. Article on Civil Architecture. Rees's *Cyclopedia*.

§ Ware's *Antiquities*, p. 134.—William of Malmsbury, *Rep. Gest. Ang. lib. i. c. 2*.

bury. The Cathedral of Armagh appears also to have been a lime and stone building before the English invasion, and must have been purely Irish, as the Danes who first took and sacked the city in 830 were Pagans, and did not become converts to Christianity until the year 948. Besides, spoil and oppression by fire and sword were their only objects.

This cathedral, when in A. D. 1125 the roof was repaired and covered with tiles by Celsus, had been partly uncovered for an hundred and thirty years, having been burned by the Danes in 995: and in 1145 Gelasius, then bishop, built an immense kiln to burn lime for the *repair* of the walls; they were consequently not then of wattle or timber. It is even said, that a small portion of the original wall of the cathedral can still be pointed out at a spot where, till of late years, the incumbent received induction since the demolition of the old parish church.*

The Culdees had a large establishment at Armagh; and some of their buildings, parts of a monastery and academy, were not only standing, but actually inhabited so late as the year 1819, when these ancient walls and “stone bed-chambers” were pulled down.†

There are also other remains which bear the characteristics of the earliest ages; such are those at Lough Derg, the chapels at Innis Murray, Arran, Clonmacnoise, and several other places: and it is worthy of remark that these our oldest ecclesiastical buildings are almost always in the immediate vicinity of pagan remains and round towers.

Of these towers there are upwards of seventy,‡ scattered throughout the kingdom, all built with a wonderful uniformity of plan, al-

* History of Armagh, pp. 128—588—603.

† Ibid. pp. 95—348.

‡ It is said that ninety-seven are still standing.—Parochial Survey, II. p. 508.

though slight differences in most of them, and in a few, varieties of more importance may be remarked. They are all circular, of small diameter and great altitude. The door is, in the most of them, at some height from the ground ; small loop-hole windows at distances in the sides give light to the spaces where the different floors or lofts once were ; and generally, but not invariably, there are four or more larger-sized windows round the top immediately below the roof, which is high and cone-shaped. The masonry in all is of superior excellence, far exceeding that of the ancient buildings adjacent, which are fast falling to decay, while these stand erect, and in many instances perfect up to the top. Of the extraordinary goodness of their workmanship Harris gives a remarkable instance, in the tower of Mahera, which about thirty years previous to his publication had been blown over, and “ lay at length and entire on the ground, like a huge gun, without breaking to pieces ; so wonderfully hard and binding was the cement in this work.*

The purpose for which these singular towers were erected has long been a subject of inquiry and conjecture ; theory after theory has been invented, but not one hitherto completely satisfactory has been produced ; all are liable to objections, but some more decidedly than others.

They have been regarded as watch towers to alarm by beacon fires,† or by the sound of the great trumpet ;‡ and it has also been supposed that they were a sort of Pharos, lighted at night by lamps, to guide pilgrims and belated travellers through the forest to the friendly shelter of the hospitable monastery.§ But placed as they

* Harris's History of Down, p. 82.

† Peter Walsh, 1684, A. D.

‡ Brereton, in Archeologia, II. p. 81.

§ Parochial Surveys, II. p. 94.

frequently are in valleys, their view must have been too limited for either of these purposes, more especially if surrounded by thick woods; and though they usually stand near churches, and those some of our most ancient, yet they do not often appear to have been situated in the near neighbourhood of abbeys or monasteries; neither have they in any instance been found in the vicinity of castles or strongholds, situations which might have given probability to such conjectures; and they are still farther resisted by the circumstance of more than one occurring at the same place, for it can hardly be supposed that two such laborious works should be erected, where it would seem that one would have answered.

It has been suggested that they were places of security;* but the space they could afford for the stowage of goods is so extremely small, as to render them nearly useless in that view; and if the design was for personal safety, the occupiers might have easily been starved into surrender; indeed those who could build such costly towers must have possessed far better means of defence.

Some antiquarians consider the tower to have been a sort of successor to the sepulchral pillar-stone, a monument like the stele of the Greeks, erected either upon the grave of some great personage, or to his honour in some remarkable spot—such as the pillar of Dioclesian at Alexandria. That these towers may therefore have been raised in commemoration of the venerated founders of Christianity in Ireland, calculating that the popular enthusiasm in those days was such as may well account for the magnitude of these testimonials, their great altitude and costliness.†

Were this theory however founded in truth, it is scarcely possible

* Montmorency on the Pillar Tower.

† Dr. Shea on the Cathedral of Kilkenny, p. 25.

but that there should exist, in some cases at least, some tradition of the patron saint who was so highly honoured; yet, innumerable as are the surviving legends of our early teachers, pointing out the respective scenes of their labours, recording their fasts, their sufferings, and their supposed miracles, detailing the buildings which they raised, and enumerating the churches and monasteries which they founded,—not even a single tradition connects the name of any one of these holy men with a tower,* although in many instances positively attaching one to the ancient church in its immediate vicinity.

They have been thought to be towers in which anchorites dwelt, analogously to the manner in which Symeon the stylite is said to have lived on the top of a pillar.† To this idea we must object that a hollow tower, from ninety to a hundred and thirty feet high, and finishing in a cone, bears no resemblance to a solid pillar of forty feet,‡ surrounded at top by a railing to support the anchorite's body, and enable him to make himself miserable without the danger of falling to the ground. In the towers they would have been comfortably sheltered from the weather, and would not have been exposed to the gaze of an admiring world, nor would such a confinement have had any thing of the marvellous in the eyes of the multitude. Had such been their purpose, would not enthusiasm have multiplied the abodes of the devotee, around the favourite shrines, as the cells of hermits are

* It is indeed remarkable, that where any tradition regarding a tower does exist, it always connects the tower with witchcraft or magic.

† Harris in Ware.—Smith's History of Waterford, pp. 357 and 358.

‡ Dr. Milner's Tour in Ireland, p. 138.

At the east end of the ancient cathedral of Down are two square columns, one of which is solid; the other is hollow, containing winding steps to the top. These, particularly the latter, somewhat resemble the stylite pillar.—Harris's History of Down, p. 27.

represented to have accumulated at some places of peculiar sanctity? It has been said that one appellation of the round tower was Clogh-Ancoire, the stone of the anchorite; and some weight has been attributed to the word *ancoire*, as meaning anchorite; and Dr. Smith even goes so far as to derive the word *cloghad*, a name often given to the towers, from Clogh-ancoire;* but the Irish dictionaries contain no such word as *ancoire*; it seems to be evidently borrowed from the Latin; and the circumstance affords an additional evidence that they were not built for anchorites, since there was no word in the native language to designate that profession, and to express it they were obliged to have recourse to a foreign word *Irised*.

Again they have been conceived to have been Penitentiaries—"Areti inclusorii ergastula," the prison of a narrow enclosure—where culprits were placed in confinement; that first, restrained to the topmost floor, they were allowed to descend story by story, according to their progress in amendment; a sort of purgatory upon earth. Dr. Smith derives this opinion from an Irish MS. Life of Dunchad O'Braoin, Abbot of Clonmacnoise,† but he gives no date, nor any account of its authenticity. From this idea of penitential towers Dr. Smith draws a theory, that the Latin word *turris* was adopted to signify penitence in Irish; but no such word is to be found in the Irish Dictionaries.‡ As the situations of several of

* Smith's History of Waterford, p. 357.

† Smith's History of the county of Cork, II. p. 415.—Dr. S. had changed his opinion between the publishing of Waterford and Cork.—The towers of Cashel and Devenish had no floors—were the penitents suspended from the top?

‡ <i>Tor</i> and <i>Tur</i> ,—a tower, a heap, a pile.	} O'Reilly's Dictionary.
<i>Tor</i> —a body of men, a congregation.	
<i>Tur</i> , a tower. <i>Turran</i> , a furnace.	} O'Brian's Dictionary.
<i>Turras</i> , a pilgrimage. <i>Turrasán</i> , a pilgrim.	

the towers were places of sanctity, such as are still resorted to for the performance of penances, the name might have been taken from the tower, and applied to the penance, although not in fact connected with it, unless by some such secondary application.

The idea that they were belfries has been one of the most favourite systems, and supported by a greater number of antiquarians* than any of the former. Giraldus Cambrensis is the first writer who makes mention of the towers; he gives them the epithet, ecclesiastical, because he observed they were usually situated near churches: had they been belfries would he not have called them *campanilæ*, the name by which such buildings were known in his day, and the more so as the *campanilæ* on the Continent were more frequently separate buildings from the church than joined to it, while in England they were customarily united to the church. From his time down to the middle of the seventeenth century, little or no mention was made of them. Spencer is silent on the subject, and even Ware but slightly touches upon it.

To the system of this being their destination there are numerous objections; the diameter at top of some of the towers is so small that a bell of very moderate size could with difficulty swing, and at such a height a small bell would have been inaudible. Mr. Brereton thinks that they were built previously to the use of cast bells in Ireland, and that if they were intended for calling people to worship the large trumpet was employed.† An additional argument against the supposition of their bell-towers may be deduced from the circumstance, that there are three or four towers, which either

Tur, a tower in Syriac—O'Flaherty and Vallancey. *Turrace*, a tower, a flame, in Hindostanee.

* Peter Walsh.—Sir T. Molyneux.—Dr. Ledwich.

† Archeologia, II. p. 81.

are without windows round the top, or have only one very small one, so that no sound could in that case escape. Even of those that have the row of top windows, their apertures are so very small that the sound of a large bell would have been muffled, and that of a small one lost. Indeed the round tower of **Dun-na-man**, in the county of **Limerick**, is so extremely slender towards the summit as to make it impossible for a bell to have been suspended there; so confined are its dimensions, that it is said an anchorite shut up in it “ could hardly incline his head, or help himself to food.”*

Again, had they been the accustomed belfries of the country, would the churches erected within a few feet of the towers have also been built with a lofty gable, pierced with an apperture for the bell, as is the case in many of the oldest structures still existing at **Grig-namana**, **Dunbrody**, **Kilcullen**, **Ballydungan**, and many others, where this useless trouble has been taken ?†

It is true the towers of **Dromiskin** and **Castle Dermot** are now used as belfries, and there is every appearance that of **Ardmore** has likewise been so employed; but **Dromiskin** has evidently undergone alteration, since it has lost a great part of its original height, and the ancient door being many feet from the ground, and therefore extremely inconvenient, a new one has been made on a level with the soil,‡ while in each of the others, channels have been cut in the door-sills to facilitate the passage of the rope; a clumsy contrivance, and apparently one of modern date, since if they had been ordinarily constructed for this purpose, and the bell usually so rung, similar perforations would have been made in the door sills of all. But surely nothing so inconvenient could have been designed; it

* Parochial Surveys, II. p. 94.

† Dr. Shea on the Cathedral of Kilkenny, p. 24.

‡ Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, II. p. 332.

never could have been intended that the bell ringer should stand exposed to the weather, or have to mount from ten to twenty feet whenever the bell was to be tolled. It may be farther asked, if they were built for Campanilæ why they were so suddenly laid aside? and why did the architects of churches of a later date, rejecting the beautiful and national round tower, either raise no tower at all, or invariably build square steeples?

Great stress has been laid* upon the towers being sometimes called Clogh-teach,† and Cloghad, which latter has been ingeniously derived from the Saxon clugga, a bell; a derivation which is made to answer the double purpose of proving that they were belfries, and that they were built by the Danes. A simpler derivation might have been drawn from the Irish word clog, a bell; but that would not have suited the second purpose. It may also be deduced, and not without some probability, from cloch or clogh, a stone. The pillar stones, which were called Cloghad, are now often named Clogh-more, the great stone; going to the stone is frequently used as an equivalent expression for going to chapel,‡ in the same manner as the Highland phrase of going to the Clachans, before mentioned.

It is said that Cloghad was a name applied by the Druids to most places of worship,§ and naturally enough, as they were usually formed of enormous stones; the appellation may have been transferred to the towers merely in the meaning of a place of worship, or of assembling together. Clogh-teach has been said to signify directly bell-house, and no doubt clog means bell; but clogh is a

* Dr. Ledwich's Irish Antiquities, p. 158.

† John Lynch, A. D. 1662.

‡ Ryland's History of Waterford, p. 265.

§ Collect. Reb. Hib. II. p. 286.

stone ; clogh-teach, may therefore simply express *the* stone-house, erected probably at a time when dwelling-houses were seldom constructed of that material.*

There is still another derivation deserving of some notice : the word clogad, signifying a cone, or pyramid.† This appears to agree so well with the character of the towers, which may be described as lofty cone-shaped towers, that possibly it is the most to be relied on.

The period at which they were built is also a doubtful point, and has been as much canvassed as their purpose. They have by some antiquarians been ascribed to Saint Fidechan, St. Columba, and others of our early confessors ; some conceive the Danes to have been their authors ; and a few give them a more remote date, being of opinion that they were reared, even before the conversion of Ireland to Christianity.

All the buildings, referable to the times of our first teachers, Declan, Kieran, Coleman, &c., that still exist, are constructed in a very inferior manner to the towers ; the appearance and the mode of workmanship bear so different a character, that the most inexperienced eye may distinguish them. Those ancient churches are coarsely put together, and in every respect ill finished, and most of them are in a state of great ruin, while the towers exhibit the excellence of their construction, many of them being still perfect ; they could scarcely therefore have been the work of the same artificers, or the production of the same age.

* As the Chipdshack Tartars call the residence of their chiefs " The stone houses ;" and Madshari, the name of their ruined capital, simply means "*the stone buildings*."—Klaproth's Travels, p. 239.

† O'Reilly's Dictionary.—Clogad is also the common term for helmet ; perhaps the Irish helmet was of the conical shape of the Phrygian cap, and thence derived this name.

If the Danes had been their builders, it appears unaccountable, that during the two hundred years of their dominion over England, they should not have built even one in that kingdom. Let it not be said that they were in too precarious and unsettled a situation to think of raising ornamental buildings ; since the same objection is still more applicable to Ireland, where in five hundred years of repeated invasion they never succeeded in completely subjugating the kingdom ; they acquired indeed some portions of the coast where they built cities, from whence they sent out armies to ravage, spoil, and oppress ; but in these very cities, where they had full sway, they do not appear to have erected towers. There certainly was one in Dublin, and Ware asserts, in a cursory way, that there had been one in Cork ; but we find no trace of any in their three chief cities, Limerick, Waterford, and Wexford ; and in the county of Wexford, the whole of which they possessed, there is not, and there does not seem to have been even one round tower. Neither can it be at all imagined, that ferocious invaders, fighting their way foot by foot, living in a perpetual struggle with the whole body of natives, who detested them as invaders, oppressors, and Pagans, could have been capable of raising such stupendous buildings, and still less that they could have engrafted the taste upon a nation which regarded them with abhorrence. And from whence could they bring this taste ? not from their own country, where there are not only no similar remains, but no record of their ever having had any such buildings.

In the cities of the Ostmen there are still standing some specimens of their works in masonry ; one especially on a large scale, by which a judgment may be formed of their style. Reginald's tower, in the city of Waterford, is yet in perfect repair ; it was built by Reginald the Dane, A. D. 1003, since which period it has been in

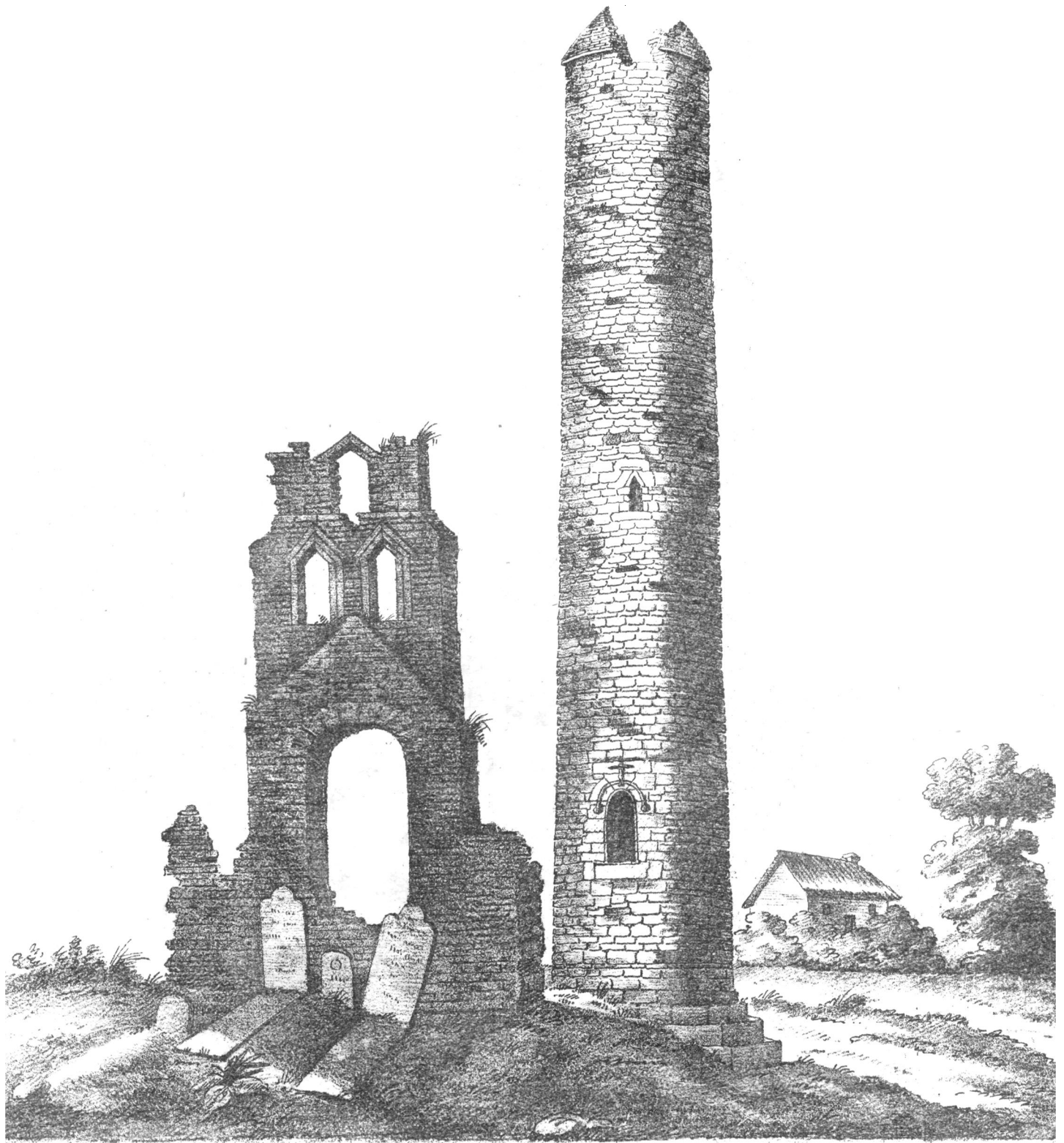
constant use, either in its original destination as a fortress, or more recently for a prison, or, as at the present day, as a depot for government stores.* The masonry of this building is very unlike that of the round towers, and could any arguments in proof of their Danish origin have been collected from its appearance, Dr. Ledwich would no doubt have availed himself of them.

In fact the style of building, and the whole character of the round towers, appears to differ from that of almost every other ancient structure which has descended to us; they are altogether distinct from the buildings erected since the English invasion, and yet greater is the variation between the towers and the oldest Christian edifices of which we have examples. It is also remarkable, that in the old accounts of the buildings at Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, &c.,† the name of the founder or builder of a tower is never mentioned, though due credit is given to the saints, abbots, and bishops who erected churches, chapels, or crosses. Thus every thing leads to the conclusion, that they bear a date previous to the introduction of Christianity into Ireland; but nevertheless it has been alleged,‡ perhaps hastily, that they must of necessity have been the work of Christian hands, because upon one tower in Ireland and one in Scotland there is sculptured a representation of our Lord upon the cross. At Donoughmore, county of Meath, there is a very coarse bas relief of the crucifixion, together with some ornamental mouldings now

* Smith's History of Waterford, p. 167.—Ryland's History of Waterford, p. 112. Danish towers, resembling Reginald's tower, are said to exist at Seskin, in the county of Kilkenny, and at Grantstown, in the Queen's County. Fitzgerald's History of Limerick, I. p. 243.—The building called Nenagh Round is by some also considered to be Danish.—Wright's Killarney.

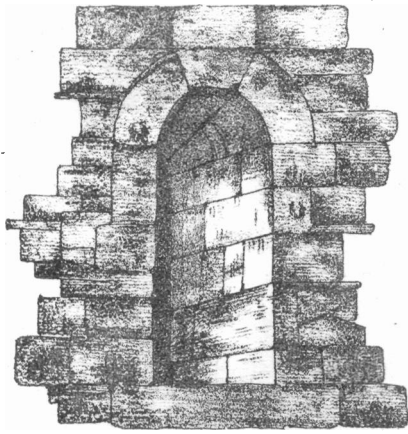
† Annals of the Four Masters.—Pembridge's Annals, as quoted in Whitelaw's History of Dublin.—Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland.—Brewster's Beauties of Ireland.—Ware's Antiquities.—Archdall's Monasticon.—Survey of King's County.

‡ Sir R. C. Hoare's Tour in Ireland, p. 284.

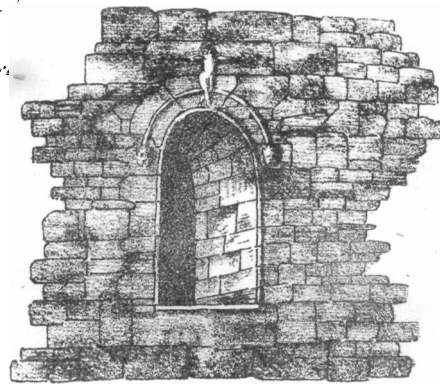


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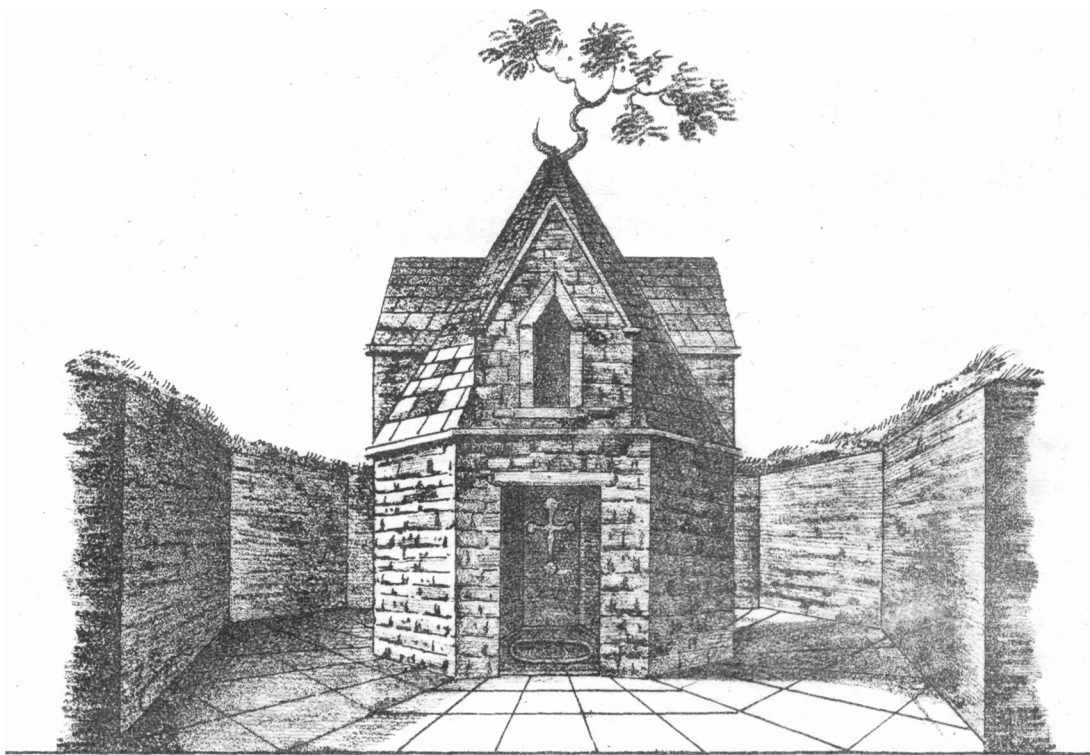
Tower of Donoughmore,
County of Meath.



The Door-way of
Kells Tower.



The Door-way of
Donoughmore Tower.



L.C.N. del.

Saint Doulagh's Well.

nearly obliterated. To an observing eye it appears quite evident that the whole of the stones forming the door case have been an after work, not only because those which are carved are of a different stone from that of which the tower is built, but that they do not range with the adjoining courses, and that some of the stones in these seem to have been deranged by the insertion of those now forming the door case. That this could have been done without danger is proved by the circumstance of Tullohern tower having stood, and being perfectly upright, though the door stones were all taken away many years ago.

Had the towers been intended for religious purposes, and had Christian sculpture been once introduced as the means of beautifying them, it is not to be doubted but that it would have been employed upon those which are the most highly finished, being enriched by ornamental carving, as at Devenish and Ardmore, or at Timahoe and Kildare, both of which have chevron and other mouldings round the door-ways.

The tower of Brechin, in Scotland, is likewise adduced as another example of Christian sculpture. But here also it may not unreasonably be suspected that the carved arch and figure are of a later date than the tower, and that they might have been inserted into the more recent mason work, with which the space that seems to have been the original door way, was at some subsequent period closed ; probably when another entrance was made from the church into the tower. However that may be, two instances only, among more than seventy towers, afford but narrow grounds whereon to found a general argument, including the whole number ; and would rather tend to the inference, that these sculptures had been in after times added, in the idea of consecrating or sanctifying these edifices, as was frequently done to pillar-stones.

The inquiry into the origin of these towers naturally leads to the question, whether there exist in any other country buildings which bear a resemblance to them. Instances, though rare, are not wanting; some bear a very slight resemblance indeed, while the greater similarity of others may be considered as throwing light upon the subject.

In Scotland the towers of Abernethy and Brechin are of precisely the same character with those of Ireland; they are both in perfect preservation, and though not so lofty as some of ours, agree with them in general; the most striking difference consists in the four windows at the top of Brechin tower, which are in the roof, and in shape exactly what are called *dormant* windows, projecting with small ridges from the cone-shaped roof of stone, while the sills of the windows rest as it seems upon the capping stone from which the roof springs.

These towers have been supposed, in Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, to be Pictish buildings, Abernethy having been the capital of the Picts; but Mess. Brereton and Gough decide on the contrary, that, as the Picts never possessed the western side of Scotland, nor had any influence in Ireland, where round towers are so numerous, the towers in question must have been erected by Irish workmen, what time Ireland had much connexion with Albin.* Such connexion notoriously existed in the olden times, as western Scotland and the Isles at several periods received colonies from this country. The Picts also called in their allies, the Scots or Irish, to assist them against the Romans, and it is remarkable that they were the only nations who offered successful resistance to the masters of the world, no mean evidence of their advancement in civilization,

* *Archeologia*, II. pp. 80—83.

and of their skill in war. By Irish workmen, therefore, and in the early ages, in all probability the towers in Scotland were built, and this idea receives support from the claim preferred with great warmth by the ancient Picts to the possession of the bones of St. Bridget, which they insisted lay buried at Abernethy. This Irish saint is venerated in a peculiar manner over the west of Scotland, and in the Hebrides, which are even said to have been named in honour of her their great protectress.*

The colonists of later times accompanying the Christian missionaries, who passed from Ireland into Caledonia, seem to have been chiefly engaged in the Western Islands, where they formed several large monastic establishments. At Iona, in particular, St. Columba erected a cathedral and several other churches. Had the Irish chieftains been in the habit of raising round towers as appendages, for whatever purpose, to their ecclesiastical foundations, would they not have adorned Oransay or Iona, the holy Isle of Saints, with one or more of these beautiful buildings?

Of similar towers in other countries, which appear to be at all connected with the present subject, the following selection from the most authentic descriptions, is, even at the hazard of being tedious, here presented.

It appears from Elphinstone's Travels in Caubul, that the tribe of Hazaureh dwell in villages of thatched houses, each village defended by a lofty tower, capable of holding ten or twelve men: a kettle drum is kept in each tower, and in time of peace one man constantly resides there to give alarm. When one drum is beaten, the sound is taken up, and repeated from station to station, upon which signal the people hasten to the point from whence the alarm

* Macpherson on the Antiquities of Scotland, pp. 217—218.

first proceeded.* It is not mentioned whether these towers were round or square; and it is to be observed that they were all situated in villages, not at places of worship: had the Irish towers been intended for gathering the septs, they would probably have been still more numerous than there are any traces of, and they would have continued to have been employed for that purpose as long as warlike habits existed, at least until the time when Giraldus Cambrensis visited Ireland.

Kondemir, who travelled in 1490 as Ambassador from Khorasan to China, relates that between the city of Sac-chu on the borders of China, and that of Khanbalic, where the emperor resided, there were ninety-nine towers, and at each town a tower called Yam; between each of these yams, and about a farsang, or three and a half English miles asunder, there were other towers called Furghu, sixty guz,† or about an hundred and ten feet in height; in these centinels kept continual watch, and upon alarm kindled a fire, which was immediately answered by the next Furghu, and so on; in this manner intelligence was conveyed to the capital in twenty-four hours, although distant three months journey.‡ At first sight these Furghu seem to furnish a case strongly in point; yet it can hardly be thought that the purpose was similar, when it is recollected that very few of our towers are within sight of one another, and that even if they were, the fire could not have been lighted on the top of the cone-shaped roof; and that supposing it to have been placed in the upper story, it would have made but a poor appearance as a beacon fire, glimmering from the small windows. Besides there were some towers without windows, in which case the

* Elphinstone's Travels into Caubul. Quarto Edit. p. 484.

† A guz is something less than two English feet.

‡ Asiatic Annual Register for 1800, p. 236.

supposition falls to the ground ; neither do the *Furghu* appear to be circular buildings, the peculiar character of the Irish tower.

Among the Mongul tribes the temples are generally constructed of wood, the high altar for incense being outside, near the great door of entrance ; and not far from this a tower, surrounded at top by a balcony, the ascent to which is by a flight of steps ; from this eminence the time of public worship is announced by wind instruments. When the people are assembled, the priest is invited to attend, by two musicians in the balcony, who blow the great spiral trumpets in slow and solemn tones.* These towers are more a-kin to the Mahomedan minarets than to the towers of Ireland, and are therefore mentioned chiefly for the remarkable circumstance of trumpets being so applied, and of those trumpets being spiral, as were the ancient Irish.

The ruins of *Madshari*, an ancient Tartar city, contain a number of towers of various shapes, round, octagon, and square, from twenty-four feet in height to sixty ;—they are of small diameter, and are arched and pointed at top ; the circular bear so great a likeness to the round Persian towers that they might be mistaken for them.† No tradition concerning them appears to exist.

A lofty tower presents itself also on the right bank of the river *Terec*, close to an *Ingushian* village. It is conical in the roof, built of very white stone, and, like those of Ireland, had no door at the bottom, but a large oblong aperture about twelve feet above the level of the ground ; the surrounding village is built of wood.‡ In this part of the *Caucasus* conical towers are described to be of frequent occurrence, so as even to form a distinguished feature in

* Klaproth's *Travels in the Caucasus*, pp. 96—112.

† *Ibid.* p. 227.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 368.

the landscapes ; but whether or not they are at present employed in worship is not remarked, nor is any conjecture offered concerning them. It is however a striking circumstance, that from these Caucasian and Colchian regions some of the colonising tribes, which formed the early inhabitants of Erin, are said to have come. Many resemblances between the ancient Irish and the Caucasian nations have been already pointed out, as the dwellings and their surrounding fences, the prejudice against stone houses, their claim of descent, their language, and their name, all facts confirmatory of the older annals of Ireland.

Mr. Harmer, a name of great authority in oriental research, has given a description, from a Greek author, of a tower situate in Palestine, *twelve yards square* and three stories high, standing on the western side of a monastery ; in this two or three hermits usually shut themselves up, as it were to keep a look out ; for on the upper story is a bell, which is rung to give the convent notice of the approach of visitors from Jerusalem. The entrance into this watch-tower is by twelve or fourteen stone steps, placed at twelve feet distance from the wall, and communicating with the door by a draw-bridge, let down from the tower to the top of the stair-case.* In size and character this differs widely from the Irish towers, and affords but little aid in elucidation of the subject : the mode of entrance is perhaps the most applicable part of the description, as it suggests the possibility of some such mode having been adopted for entering our towers, all traces of which may easily be conceived to have long since disappeared.

At Kassino, in Bulgaria, Professor Pallas, as quoted at length by General Vallancey,† describes a tower, which both in shape and

* Archeologia, v. IX.

† Collect. Reb. Hiber. III. p. 193.

proportions bears a strong analogy to the Irish towers. From the want of more particular details no important inference can be drawn from it. In justice, however, it must be observed that, although tauntingly called a Turkish minareh by Dr. Ledwich,* it holds a much closer likeness to the Irish than to the Turkish towers.

Hindustan also contains examples of edifices somewhat similar. Lord Valentia describes two towers, which he declares to have immediately reminded him of the round towers Ireland;† his design represents them as being more ornamented, and having roofs approaching rather to the Ogee shape than the cone; the doors are situated exactly as in our Irish towers, and altogether the general resemblance is very remarkable. The ascent to the doors appears to be by means of a ladder. His Lordship observes that the neighbouring inhabitants held them in no veneration, but that vast bodies of pilgrims from the province of Jynegaur, on the western side of the peninsula, were accustomed to come there annually for worship.

Fortunately some little addition has been made to this scanty description by another writer who, although mentioning them but incidentally, speaks of these towers at the village of Vasu Paduka,‡ as a collateral evidence of the true situation of the ancient city of Palibothra, “the royal seat of the Baliaputra Rajahs, a dynasty named from their great founder and ancestor Bali.”§ But Bali, and Bel, and Baal, oriental antiquaries have given proof of being one and the same; and Bali is shewn to be that apostate Nimrod,

* Antiquities of Ireland, p. 166.

† Valentia's Travels, I. p. 85. Quart. Ed.

‡ A village four miles from Bhangulpore.

§ Franklin's Enquiry into the site of Palibothra, p. 6 —Belus, the Lord or King, the divinity, in one word the sun.—Baal or Belus, the Babylonian Bel, the Phenician Baal, are all derived from the Hebrew Baal, Lord. That Bel was the sun is shewn in Virgil—*Eneid*, I. v. 733. —Travels in the East, I. p. 431.

who is said to have been the first author of sun worship.* If the inscribed tablet preserved at Vasu Paduka be rightly explained, these towers are 2300 years old.†

The Hindoos on the eastern coast of the Indian peninsula are said to be free from mixture with Mahometanism, and to practise their old religion with all its superstitions; and that in consequence pagodas are more numerous in the Rajahmundry, and the neighbouring circars, than elsewhere; and it is remarkable, that in this district they vary from the pyramidal form commonly adopted in other parts of Hindostan, being here round towers, “either pointed or truncated at the summit, and ornamented with something excen-trical, but frequently a round ball stuck upon a spike; this ball seems intended to represent the sun, the deity of the place.”‡

Let old Hanway, so often quoted by writers on this subject, add his testimony, and in his own words, as they are stronger than some antiquarians seem willing to allow.

“Sari,§ was built by the ancient Persians, and there are yet four temples of the Gebres, or fire worshippers, who formerly inhabited all this coast: it seemed inconsistent that the Persians suffered these temples to remain unmolested after the abolition of a religion, which they now esteem grossly idolatrous, but they are made of the most durable materials. These edifices are rotund, of about thirty feet in diameter, raised in height to a point, near an hundred and twenty feet high.”||

* Indian Antiq. VI. p. 194.

† Franklin's Enquiry, p. 23.

‡ Pennant's View of Hindostan, II. p. 127.

§ The capital of the Persian province of Mazanderan. Near this city of fire-worshippers is shewn a tumulous tomb of Sohraüb, who was killed by his father Bustam. Travels in the East, III. 265.

|| Hanway's Travels, II. p. 234. Dublin Octavo Edition, 1754.

Khorassan was in ancient times the chief focus of the fire-worship, the country in whose capital, Balhk,* the great Archimagus and reformer of the Gebres dwelt, and had his principal fire-temple. There then we may naturally expect to find some architectural remains of corresponding character. Accordingly, Mr. Frazer, a recent traveller in that region, has discovered that buildings of this nature are of frequent occurrence. Among the ruins of the city of Damghan, he found a curious tower built of brick, highly ornamented and singular in its architecture, being of a cylindrical form, and only fifteen feet in diameter. It is about thirty feet high, and crowned by a conical dome.†

There is another prodigious circular tower called Goom buz-e-caos; its inner diameter ten paces, or about fifty feet, the walls are nearly ten feet thick, and the whole height is not less than an hundred and fifty feet; the diameter of the tower gradually lessens as it rises, so as to give the walls a slight degree of batter, and the top is finished in a lofty and pointed cone. The tower, though circular within, is on the outside divided into ten "salient and recentering angles." Withinside the wall is perfectly smooth, without a break to the very top, where one window gives light to the whole. It appears evidently to have had no floor, nor any division, nor is there the least vestige of stairs. It is built of the finest square fire-baked bricks, about two and a half inches thick; the cone-shaped dome is also covered with bricks of the same shape laid flat, which have endured the lapse of time so well, that no more than two have failed. The masonry is excellent, and the lime cement so strong that the building is as perfect as when newly finished, except for a

* Balhk signifies an oak—the sacred tree of the Magi and the Druids.—Drummond's *Origines*, I. p. 322. Balhk was also the great seat of Magian learning.—*Ibid.* I. p. 337.

† Narrative of a Journey into Khorassen, by J. B. Fraser, p. 314.

few feet round the bottom, where bricks have to some depth been forced out ; but notwithstanding, the tower apparently stands in perfect stability. The style of building, and the general appearance of this tower, agrees precisely with that at Damghan, and with similar structures at Semnoon, Bostan, and other places.

Immediately below the roof a fascia contains an inscription, and at about thirty feet from the bottom a second one bears also an inscription, which seemed to be in the old Arabic characters ; but Mr. Frazer's Meerza could not make out more than that there were some memorials evidently expressive of the date. The situation of the tower is supposed to have been that of the ancient city of Jorjawn, surrounded as it is by mounds of earth, bricks, and pottery, the usual detritus of an oriental town, but no other building remains standing in its neighbourhood.*

Most of the extensive ruins, so thickly scattered throughout this country, are by tradition ascribed to the Ghebres ; and the remnants of the dwelling-houses resemble, in almost every particular, those inhabited by the present fire-worshippers, some thousands of whom live in the city of Yeza.† This tower, in accordance with those described by Hanway, greatly corroborates the evidence derived from his observations.

At the present day but few fire-temples remain in Persia, Mahometan zeal having levelled the greater part ; however, besides those which are still standing,‡ Mr. Morier describes a square fire-house twenty-four feet long, near the tomb of the famous Rustam ; from the small windows, which are situated only one on each side, it may be inferred that this was merely a place for the preservation of the sacred flame ; and not very far from it are two raised altars,

* Narrative of a Journey into Khorassan, p. 613.

† Frazer's Journey into Khorassan, Appendix, p. 22.

‡ Macdonald Kinier's Geographical Survey.

on which it may be supposed the fire was at certain periods exhibited to the people.* Fire-temples are also mentioned at Firozebad and elsewhere, by Rinier ; near Ispahan, by other travellers, under the name of attash or atesh ; and at Baku, the region of bitumen and flame, when Hanway visited the place, fire-worshippers preserved the holy flame in low ancient temples, built of stone and arched over.† The account of these low vaulted buildings bears so strong a resemblance to some curious cells, which yet remain at Smerwick, county of Kerry,‡ that the very same words might be employed to describe them.

When in 1824 Captain Keppel was at Baku, he went to view the fire-temple which now remains. He found in the middle of a pentagonal enclosure a small square building, standing on a platform, with three ascending steps on each side. At every corner stands a tall hollow stone column, through which pours a bright flame ; near this fire house is a large altar, on which naptha is kept continually burning. The whole is surrounded by a thick wall which contains small cells, each inhabited by a devotee.§

There were then at Baku several pilgrims, some of them Brahmins and some Viragees, the strictest caste of Hindoo ascetics.||

Some of the low stone-roofed buildings in Ireland present somewhat of the same character ; and if the small oratory at Killaloe be truly represented in Grose's *Irish Antiquities*, the door and windows are precisely similar in shape to those of the older buildings of India

* Morier's *Travels in Persia*, First Journey, p. 128.

† Hanway's *Travels*, II. p. 333. Edit. Dub. 1754.

‡ Smith's *History of Kerry*, p. 191.

§ Perhaps the cells in the wall of the Stig-an-air-pyratheia were intended for the same purpose.

|| Captain Keppel's *Personal Narrative*, II. pp. 216—219.

and Persia, as well as of Egypt, narrow at top and wide at bottom.

The above sketch presents but a few instances of analogy with our towers, but these are of great weight. Some of the last mentioned clearly indicate as well the existence of fire-worship, as the employment in that worship of both towers and fire-houses. It seems, therefore, a reasonable inference, that such was also the purpose of the mysterious Irish towers. There can be no doubt that our ancestors worshipped not only the sun, but also fire, the emblem of its heat and brilliancy, and the pillar, or obelisk, as one of the divine rays of the sun. And it may be safely assumed, that most of our ruder antiquities, appertaining to the remote ages, are remnants of that worship. At a very early period that worship prevailed in the East, and had been spread from thence, by the different Scythian waves of emigrant wanderers, over a large portion of the world, including great part of Europe, and extending to Ireland. In Persia the adoration of the sun and of his emblem fire, continued pure and free from mixture with any other superstition to a later date than among surrounding nations. It was thought, in the first ages, impious to suppose the divine essence could be confined within a temple built by men, and therefore the sacred fire was kept in open temples, such as Stonehenge. But Zoroaster, who in the reign of Gushtasp, the Darius Hystaspes of the Greeks, was the Archimagus and reformer of Persia, introduced the innovation of temples for the preservation of the sacred flame. This improvement, it may easily be imagined, extended itself to countries of kindred faith. Thus the worship was first performed at the cromleac or altar, or within the circle of stones, which constituted the earlist open temple; in later times at the covered fire-temple, or round tower.

That a connexion between Iran and Erin was kept up, there is good reason, in the abundant testimony of the Irish annals, to believe. And we may justly trace to this source the many customs of eastern, chiefly of Persian origin, which are found in this country; hence also the extraordinary coincidences which exist between the Persian and Irish early histories, as before alluded to;* hence the appropriation to Ireland of so many eastern fables and legends, and even of the famous prophecy attributed to Zoroaster.† It is difficult to imagine these to be all interpolations by the monks of the middle ages, or to conceive that they could have produced forgeries, which required a degree of learning, both classical and oriental, far exceeding what they have hitherto been suspected of; indeed beyond the knowledge Europe then possessed of eastern history and countries; forgeries too so artfully devised as often to surprise by a concurrence the most curious and unexpected with chronology.‡ If the Irish monks enjoyed this high degree of learning, whence did they derive it? Not from Europe, where it did not then exist.

It follows therefore that either these joint annals were transferred from the parent country along with the colonists, or that the Irish monks of those dark ages obtained their information from that country, with which consequently a connexion and intercourse was maintained.

There was no communication between Persia and Britain, because the first or eastern settlers, as it appears, had been driven from that country by the Cumri; therefore the antiquities of Britain and Ireland agree only during such time as being peopled by the

* Vindication of the Ancient History of Ireland, p. 180. et seq.—History of Armagh, p. 611. Trans. R. I. A., X.

† Ibid. p. 199.—Origin of Pagan Idolatry, II. p. 78.

‡ O'Connor's Dissertations, p. 7.

same race, the same modes of worship were common to both countries ; or where the same customs were followed by the second as well as the first family of settlers. Several differences are observable between the remains of the two countries, besides that of the lofty fire-temple and the low fire-house. One of the most remarkable of these, is the total want of letters on the British Druidical monuments, while in Ireland there have been found several inscriptions in the Ogham, that singular character, hitherto not satisfactorily explained, but which we may now hope to see decyphered, if indeed a key to the Persepolitan cunieform letters has already been discovered, for Sir William Jones has declared them to be of the same family.

Some evidence, which is not without weight, may be permitted to lend its aid in support of the above idea. The names of many of the places where towers stand bear a reference to fire.*

One tower is said by Mr. O'Flaherty to be still called Teample-na-Grein, the temple of the Sun.†

The object for which the towers were built is distinctly mentioned in the ancient history called the Psalter of Cashel, and that of Tara to be for the preservation of the sacred fires of Baal, "the Baal-Theine." It is stated in the Psalter of Tara, that in the year A. D. 79, there was a solemn convocation at Tara, where it was ordained that the sacred fire should be exhibited from the tower of Thlachtga in Munster, and from all other fire repositories, on the thirty-first of October; and that if by any accident the holy flame had been extinguished, it should be relighted from thence. It was also enacted that a tower for fire should be built in each of the other pro-

* Collect. Reb. Hib. vi. p. 147.

† Transactions R. I. A. XIV. p. 105.

vinces of Connaught, Leinster, Meath, and Ulster; and a tax called Scraball, equal to about three-pence per head, was laid upon all adults to provide a fund for that purpose.*

Fire worship having been persevered in by the King Lugaid, the son of Laogaire, his death by lightning was considered as a direct punishment from heaven for having preserved the Baal-Thiene in opposition to the preaching of St. Patrick.†

It is recorded in Irish history that Rosa Failgee, the son of Cathair More, who was made monarch of all Ireland, A.D. 175, was a prince deeply learned in all the knowledge of his times, and that he built the tower of Rosenallis, which derives its name from him, a proof of the antiquity of this tower at least.‡

Bede, in his life of St. Cuthbert, observes, that there were still many of these receptacles of fire in Ireland, and that they were the only part of the heathen idolatries which then remained.

In several towers the floors, which are usually on a level with the door, have, on examination, been found to contain a quantity of wood ashes,§ presumptive evidence of the previous occurrence of fires within.

Phœbus, the ruling power among the gods!

Whom first we serve, whose woods of unctuous pine

Burn on thy heap, and to thy glory shine.||

* Psalter of Tara, by Comerford, p. 41.—Cited Parochial Surveys, III. p. 319.—A genuine copy of this Psalter is said to be now in the British Museum.—Trans. Ibero Celtic Society, p. xxii.

† Psalter of Cashel, p. 68.—Cited Parochial Surveys, III. p. 320.—The original Psalter of Cashel is now in the British Museum. It was compiled from more ancient documents, by Cormac Archbishop of Cashel and King of Munster, who was killed in battle, A.D. 908.—Ibid. p. LX.

‡ Parochial Surveys, III. p. 328.

§ Survey of Down, p. 290.

|| Dryden's Virgil.

The tower of Drumboe appears much vitrified withinside, as if from strong and continued fires.*

There is in the county of Mayo a town of the name of Bel, so commonly called, but fully as often spelled *Baal*. There is a tower here, now only fifty feet in height, and near it a very small church, of which the masonry much resembles that of the tower. The place is noted for superstitious practices, particularly at one season of the year, when crowds of people collect, and after various ceremonies, conclude with feasting and dancing: the river is regarded with a respect, the remains of ancient veneration, and much of the pagan worship is retained in their present rites.†

From the above details it seems a reasonable conclusion, that lofty slender towers, intended like the obelisk and the pyramid‡ to symbolize a ray of the sun, were erected to preserve the sacred fires of Bel, which appear to have blazed in the lower story, yet so placed as to be at a sufficient height to admit the gazing adoration of the people. And that the time at which they were erected was previous to the introduction of Christianity, and during the period that the worship of the sun continued to be the national religion.

The ports of Ireland were, according to Tacitus, better known for trade, in the time of Julius Cæsar, than those of Britain; whence could that have arisen but from a commercial intercourse with Spain and with the East? From this circumstance, however, we may derive some clue to assist in unravelling the date of the tower-building period. If at that period commerce was fully established, it must have been of long standing, since it is of slow growth, and

* Survey of Down, p. 290.

† Survey of Mayo, p. 130.

‡ In Coptic the Pyramids are called *Pi-re-mouc*, the Sun-beam.—Bruce's Travels, I. p. 137. Murray's Octavo Edition.

much time is necessarily required to encourage and confirm it, and more especially so in those early ages when rapidity of communication was unknown. It has been proved by Lord Rosse, in his *Defence of the Ancient History of Ireland*, that the Phenicians and Carthaginians carried on much trade with the British Islands for lead and tin, in the time of Herodotus, 500 years before Christ. During the course of those five hundred years the arts, the manners, and the religion of this country, were gradually imported and nationalized. But taking the landing of Julius Cæsar in Britain, in the year 55, before Christ, as a fixed point of time, and counting back fifty years from that, we shall be brought to about an hundred years before the Christian era, at which time the introduction of the improvements and innovations of Zoroaster, and that also of fire-towers, may, without straining probability, be supposed to have fully taken place. That it was not much earlier may be inferred from the before-mentioned ordinance of the year 79, A. D., to increase the number of the towers in the different provinces. The tower-building period may therefore have extended from about the year 100 before Christ, though perhaps five centuries, or until some time after the æra of St. Patrick, A. D. 434, when Christianity was sufficiently established in the island, to put a stop to the practice of raising these pyramidal towers, although the idolatry of the sun, was partially followed so late as when Bede wrote in the eighth century. Persia continued to worship both the sun and fire to a much later date,* and in her remote provinces, notwithstanding Mahomedan tyranny, numbers of Ghebres still exist.

* The Mahomedan geographer Ebn Haukal, who travelled in the tenth century, declares, that fire-worship at that time prevailed so greatly, that “there was no district or town of Fars without a fire-temple.”—*Travels in the East*, III. p. 357.

According to this view the towers may well have been accounted ancient, as they appear to have been when Cambrensis arrived in Ireland; yet it does not make their age so absurdly remote as to render their present existence almost an impossibility.

Let not the excellence of the workmanship prove an obstacle to the adoption of this hypothesis, since Persia, from which the Irish claim to derive in great measure their descent, their arts, and their religion, was remarkable for her skill in masonry, and possessed a knowledge of the keyed arch* from time immemorial.

The purposes of the Egyptian pyramids are considered to have been three-fold:† as temples, as tombs, and as observatories.

May not the towers have been also intended for more than one object, as fire-temples, and as observatories? for as all the religious festivals depended upon the sun's course, and were decided by his entrance into certain constellations, continual observation of the heavens was in consequence necessary. And that astronomy was highly cultivated, and rightly understood in Ireland, is proved by the fact, which has been often quoted, that Bishop Virgilius, an Irishman, educated at the college of Armagh, in the year 767, asserted the spherical form of the earth, at a time when all Europe was ignorant of the fact.‡

The towers might also have served for gnomons, like the obelisks of Thebes.§ The many ages elapsed since the building of the towers, the erection of other structures close around them, the occupation of the circumjacent ground as grave-yards, and the

* Morier's Travels in Persia.—Ouseley's Travels in the East.—And above all, Chardin's Journey in Persia.—This early knowledge of the arch may have arisen from the absolute want of timber in some of the provinces.

† Maurice's Ind. Ant. vol. iii. p. 86.

‡ Ware's Irish Writers, p. 50.—Collect. Reb. Hib. IV. p. 315.

§ Bruce's Travels, I. p. 46.—Murray's Octavo Edition.

various other changes which must have occurred, may well have obliterated any paved or other platform which might have served to receive the shadow.

It is also very possible that they may have been used in calling the people to worship by the sound of the sonorous Irish trumpet; a practice observed by Bishop Pocock, in Egypt, where he was much struck by the conformity existing between the Egyptians and the Irish. And the conjecture is corroborated by the circumstance which he records of trumpets having been found in the ground around some of these buildings, and an iron one even in the floor of one of the towers.* Brazen trumpets have been discovered in the counties of Cork, Limerick, Down and Armagh; one of them is six feet long; another, although deficient of the centre division, forms an almost semicircular sweep of eight feet four inches. When blown its prodigious sound, somewhat like that of a gong, was heard over the surrounding country.†

A minute description of buildings, which are so well known, would be useless; it will be sufficient to point out some of their peculiarities.

The towers appear to have been built at different times, and by different workmen. Those of Clondalkin, Augherard, Drumcliffe, Swords, Teghadoe and Turlogh, are considered among the plainest.

The masonry at the tower of Glandalough, and St. Kevin's kitchen, which is much alike, is coarser than that of many others.

Trumery tower is remarkable for being cylindrical from bottom to top; part of the wall has fallen out of one side, and shews that

* Archeologia, II. p. 82.

† History of Armagh, p. 608.—Transactions R. I. A. VIII. p. 12.—Walker's Irish Bards, p. 109.

the outside and inside face of the walls were built of round field stones (or perhaps coggle-stones from the sea-beach, as is the case at Cloyne) very well put together, all the middle part being filled with small stones and rubble, but the whole so well cemented that it is easier to break the stone than to dis sever the mortar.*

Ardmore, Devenish, Roscrea, Kildare, Kilkenny, Monaster Boice, and those at Clonmacnoise, are among the finest and the most perfect.

Ardmore and Devenish are more ornamented than any others. Ardmore, which is ninety feet high, is wholly built of hewn stone, beautifully jointed and divided into four stories by projecting bands, in which it differs from other towers; the pyramidal roof is also of stone well cut and closely laid: it was formerly finished with an ornament, which is said to have resembled a monk's sandal, that is, hollow in the middle, and rising obtusely at each end. Might not this have been the Druidic crescent, which resembled, or rather which was meant to represent the sacred boat, flat in the middle, and the points not greatly raised, such as is called the Isiac crescent, and nearly agreeing with the trident of Seeva, the crowning ornament in the ancient pyramids of Deogur in India?†

The inside of this tower is coated with a plaster which is perfectly smooth, and still retains its whiteness. It has been used as a bell tower, as a channel for the rope is cut in the door-sill, and part of the timber for hanging the bell remained when Dr. Smith wrote; but these beams must have been of very modern date, compared with the flooring timbers, the whole of which were gone.‡ Within this church-yard St. Declan's small stone-roofed house is still shewn.

* Survey of Antrim, p. 596.

† Origin of Pagan Idolatry, III. p. 286.

‡ Smith's History of Waterford, p. 48.—Ryland's History of Waterford, pp. 326—329.—Montmorency on the Pillar-Tower, p. 48.

The tower of Devenish, in Lough Erne, is eighty-two feet high and forty-nine in circumference; the stones of which it is built appear to have been chiseled on the spot to fit the exact place they occupy; many of them are dove-tailed into each other with the greatest nicety,* in the same way as in the low fire-houses before mentioned, near Smerwick, in the county of Kerry, according to the description in Smith's history of that county,† which strengthens the idea that they are nearly coeval with the towers, and destined for the same purposes. On the north-east side, where the wind has least power, the building has a fresh appearance, as if recently finished; the conical roof is crowned by something of the same nature as that formerly at Ardmore. Below the springing of the roof the wall is surmounted by a cornice richly sculptured in foliage, and the key-stones of the upper window arches are carved into heads, a singular instance of such an ornament being employed. The inside is not plastered, but has been dressed and smoothed until almost polished. Close to the tower once stood the stone-roofed house of St. Molaise, which was built in precisely the same manner as the tower, it is now pulled down.‡

The tower of Kineth varies from all the others in the lower story, being hexagon, from which to the top it becomes circular. Dr. Smith quotes an Irish MS. Life of Dunchad, which places the date of this tower in the year 1015; unfortunately it does not distinctly mention for what object it was built.§ The want of vouchers for the authenticity of the manuscript throws some doubt upon the

* Sir R. C. Hoare's Tour in Ireland, p. 181.

† Smith's History of Kerry, p. 191.

‡ Parochial Surveys, II. p. 193.—Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland.—Belfast Magazine, No. IV.

§ Smith's History of Cork, II. 415.

assigned date. It would however be both curious and useful to compare the style of workmanship with that of the other towers,* and with the Danish tower at Waterford, erected about twelve years earlier. The hexagonal shape of this tower in some degree resembles that of the great Khorassan tower of Goom-buz-e-caous.

Kilcullen, which is one of the loftiest towers, being an hundred and thirty feet high, has a very peculiar door, which gradually decreases in breadth from the bottom to the springing of the horse-shoe arch which forms the head; so that it resembles a huge key-hole.†

At Druncleve the tower, now imperfect, is described as having two doors, one of them surmounted with an ornamental moulding; and the remaining lower part of one at Dysert O'Dea, in the same county of Clare, affords another specimen of ornamented work, which resembles that of Ardmore in having a belting course eight inches deep round the outside, just above the lower story.‡

The towers of Timahoe and Kildare both have their entrances embellished by cut stone mouldings, among which the chevron seems to hold a place §

Near the cathedral of Cloyne stands a tower now ninety-two feet high; it is built of round stones from the sea shore, which were prepared with the greatest accuracy, to about half the height of the tower; from thence to the top a different stone is apparent, and the manner of laying them, also changes.

When this tower was struck by lightning in the year 1749, and

* An antiquarian gentleman who has lately visited Kineth tower remarks, that its appearance of antiquity is not nearly so great as in the other towers which he has seen.

† Survey of Kildare, p. 12.

‡ Survey of Clare, p. 307.

§ Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland, p. 155.

very much damaged, some stones forced out of the sides were found to be admirably well fitted, and jointed into each other.

In the church-yard stands the small building called St. Coleman's chapel, but the stone roof has fallen.*

By far the greater number of towers have in their interior, marks of the places where the floors of the different stories rested. In Kilkenny there are six set-offs or ledges; in Kells tower five, placed at equal distances, and diminishing the thickness of the wall by about four inches at each set-off; in others there are square holes, as if for the admission of timbers. When Harris wrote his History of Down he speaks of blocks of wood then remaining in some of them. Glendelough is an instance of this mode. Projecting stones or brackets, which sustained the beams, are still to be seen in several towers; such is the case in that of Kilree, county of Kilkenny, also in those of Cloyne and Clondalkin. Some few towers are perfectly smooth withinside, almost polished, and not exhibiting a vestige of any footing for a floor; as Ardmore, Devenish, and Cashel. Mr. Brereton says that all the towers which he saw, were without marks of having had floors until within ten feet of the top;† but however this may be in some, by far the greater number shew plainly the different stories into which they have been divided, which varies from three, as at Clondalkin, four, as at Ardmore, to eight, as at Fartagh-na-geiragh, county of Kilkenny.‡

With regard to windows, they have usually one small one, or a loop-hole on every story, and most commonly four windows ranged round the top at a short distance below the roof: a few vary in this respect; we find at Kells five, in others six windows, as in the

* Crofton Croker's Researches in the South of Ireland, p. 243.

† Harris's History of Down, p. 221. Edition 1744.

‡ Archeologia, v. II.

tower of Kilkenny; while Tulloherin, in the same county, has even eight; and some few have no upper tier of windows, or perhaps have only one; as Donoughmore, county of Meath, Monaster Boice, county of Louth, Turlogh, county of Mayo, and Ram's Island in Lough Neagh.

Kildare, Cloyne, and two or three others are finished by a battlement; that of Kildare, Harris mentions in his edition of Ware's *Antiquities*, had been repaired, and a neat battlement added to it within a few years of the time when he wrote.* The top of the tower at Cloyne, was built in 1749, after the roof had been destroyed by a storm, which so damaged the wall, that six feet in depth was taken down and a battlement substituted.†

The doors are generally elevated above the surface of the ground, the height varying from six to twenty-four feet; of this extreme height there is an instance at Kilmacduagh, county of Galway; in four or five towers the doors are twenty feet from the base, and fifteen feet is a very frequent height. A few towers however have the door on a level with the ground, or very nearly so. At Swords, for instance, the door ranges with the present external surface; in the tower of Aghaviller also the door is nearly even with the ground, there being but one step up to it. In the first of these instances it is possible the earth may have risen by accumulation of rubbish to the height of the door; but in the second that cannot be, as the basement is visible.§ The door in the tower of Ram's Island is very near the soil, and is approached by a single stone step,|| but whether

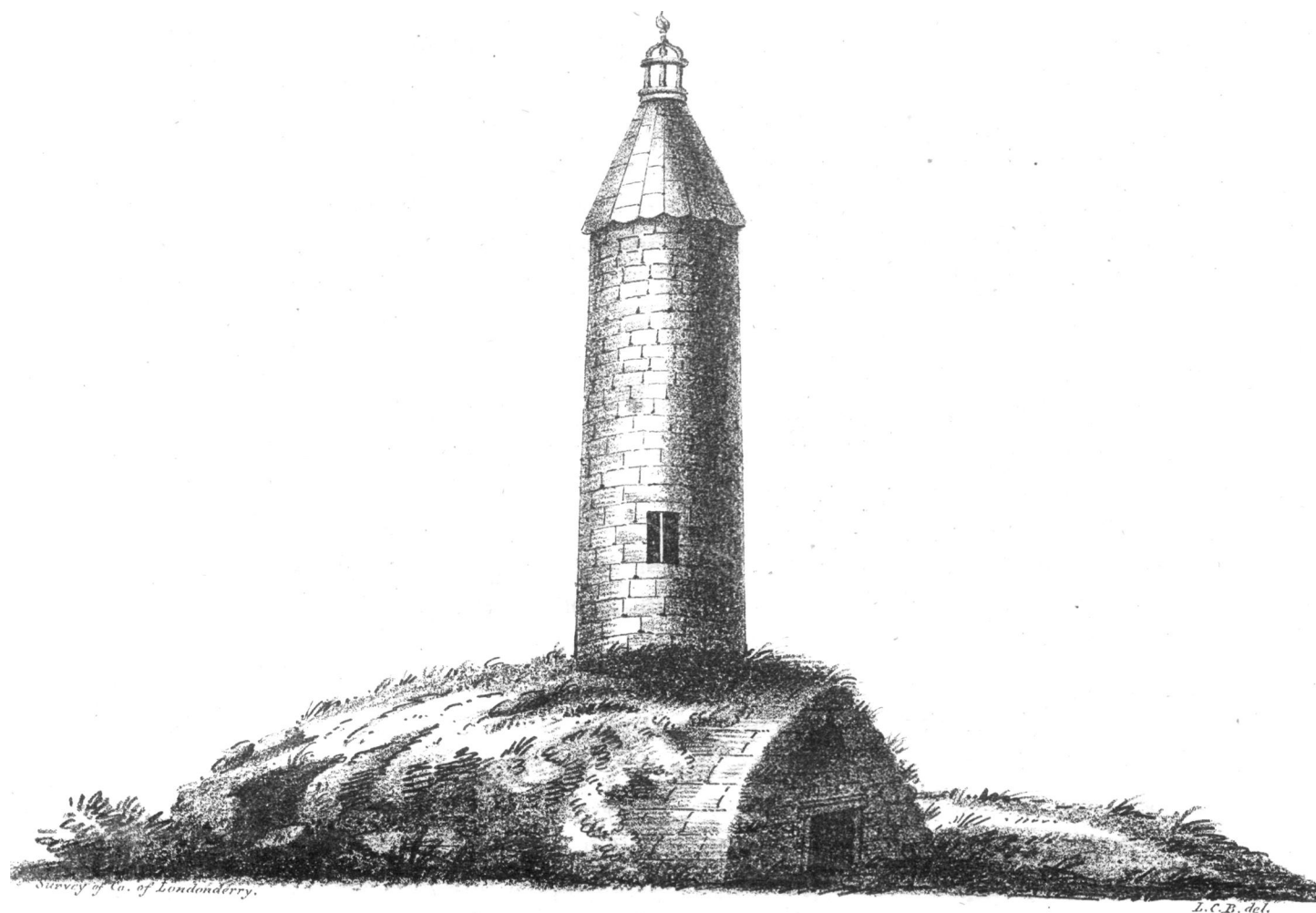
* Kilkenny Survey, p. 631.

† Ware's *Antiquities*, II. p. 128.—Harris's *History of the county of Down*, p. 221.

‡ *Researches in the South of Ireland*, p. 244.

§ Kilkenny Surveys, p. 631.

|| Reid's *Tour in Ireland*, p. 179.



The Long Tower,
At the Ruins of Columb-kill Monastery,
Londonderry.

ancient or a modern addition does not appear ; however the adjacent ground was very anciently a cemetery, and its surface may possibly have risen to its present level. In Castle Dermot tower there is an entrance on the ground level, but it was made some years since for the convenience of the bell-ringer.

There are two instances of towers having two doors, those of Drumcleve, county of Clare, and Aghaviller, county of Kilkenny.

The greater number of towers rise from the ground without any base, but some few have this member. Aghaviller, already mentioned, and Kilree, which have circular bases fourteen inches deep, and projecting six inches, which rest upon square foundations formed of large blocks of stone. At old Kilcullen there is both a projecting base and two plinths round the bottom of the tower.* Some towers stand also upon a sort of crypt or vaulted excavation ; at Oughterard, county of Kildare, is one so supported ; and at Londonderry the tower is placed upon an excavated mound, vaulted and lined with stone. This building is only thirty-five feet high, apparently the lowest of all the Irish towers, and is in perfect preservation, having a remarkably high conical roof ; it is said to stand near the spot where Columba planted a monastery.†

Clondalkin tower, near Dublin, rises from a solid basement of stone work, resembling the artificial mount of an ancient castle.‡ This tower, said by some to be eighty-four feet high, by others an hundred and ten, is remarkable for continuing of the same internal diameter to about two-thirds of its height, where it narrows so suddenly as to give the wall within almost an ogee shape. The door is

* Survey of Kildare, p. 130.

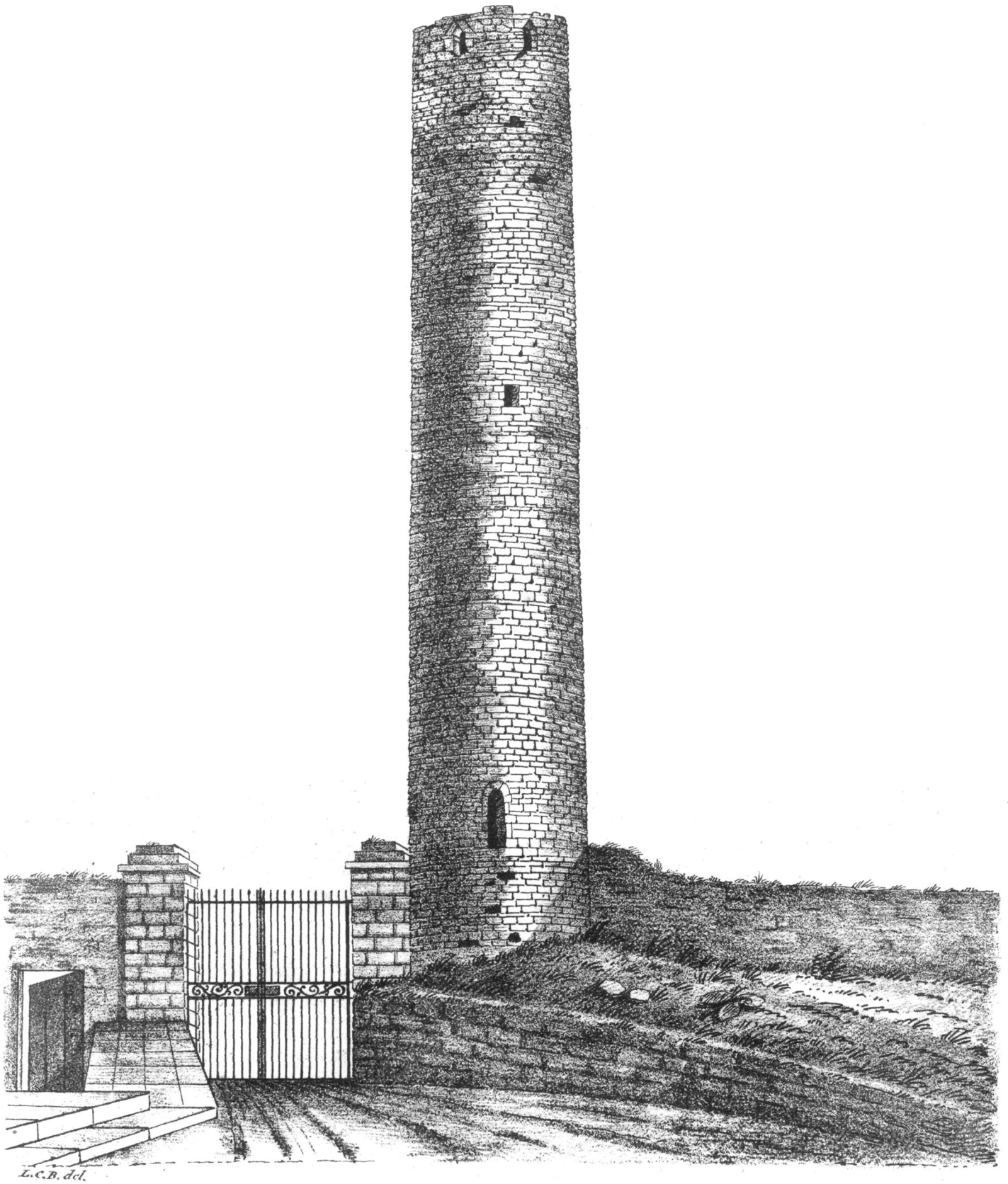
† Survey of Londonderry.—The vault is so well built, and continues in so perfect a state, that it is used as an icehouse.

‡ Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, I. p. 207.

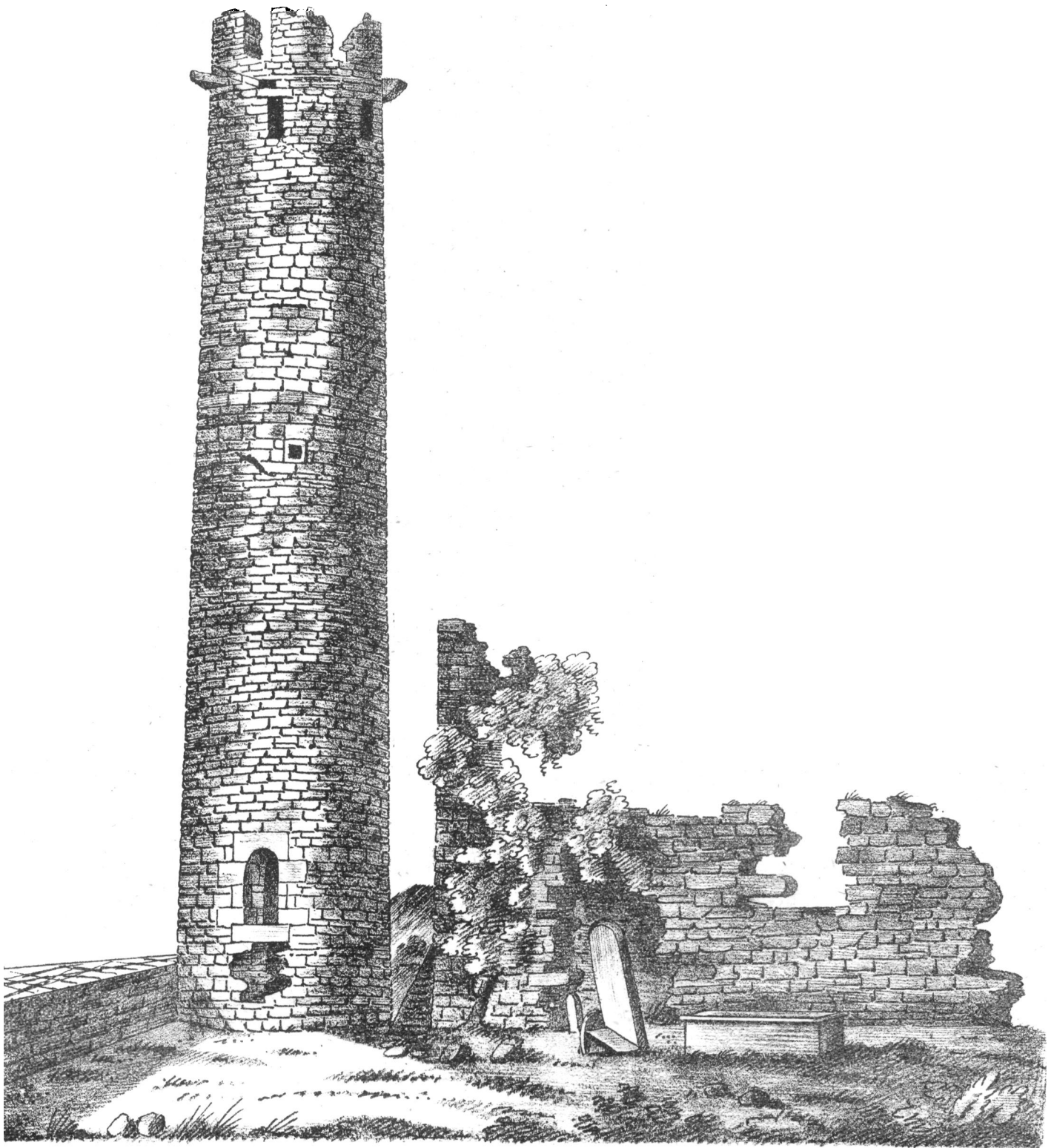
fifteen feet from the ground, and square-headed, being finished by a lintel of one long stone. There were here originally only three stories, the floors being supported by brackets, which have lately been again converted to their former use, floors having been newly laid, and ladders placed from loft to loft, so that any person may easily mount to the upper story of this ancient tower.

At Kells, in the county of Meath, the tower, which is said to be ninety-nine feet high, rises from a square foundation, formed of very large stones, which are visible on the side towards the street; on the church-yard side the earth has risen considerably, so that the door, which is about six feet above the present level, must have been originally twelve or fourteen feet from the ground. Formerly the tower was filled with earth up to the door-sill, but some years ago this was thrown out in search of treasure. Immediately below the door is a ledge six inches broad, which probably supported the then floor. From this ledge to the bottom the wall is four feet six inches thick. This tower is built of dark blue limestone, which has scaled in several parts; the round-headed door-case is of freestone; the arch is formed of three stones, the centre one reaching the whole thickness of the wall, three feet nine inches. Next above the arch is a stone from four to five feet long, and nine or ten inches in depth, which has been chiseled so as to leave a projecting block in the middle, cut to agree with the centre stone; on each side of the door-way there are faint traces of mouldings and of heads, which however were not symmetrically placed. The stones beyond the door-case are many of them curiously dove-tailed, as they are in some other parts of the tower as well as in St. Columb's house, which stands at no great distance.

All the windows are rudely pointed arches, formed by two stones



Kells Tower, Co. of Meath.



L. C. B. del.

Kilree Tower,
County of Kilkenny.

sloping towards each other until they meet at the top. In the inside, at about a third of the whole height, are two very large projecting stones, so placed as to give the idea of their having once supported narrow winding stairs.

Kilree tower, which is in height an hundred and twenty feet, and of exquisitely fine masonry,* has some peculiarities which distinguish it from all others. The top has evidently been originally built with a battlement, and as far as can be judged from the ground, it appears as if the cone roof, which no longer exists, must have sprung from within this parapet. At about eight or ten feet below the top project four or five stones of considerable length; for what purpose these could have been intended it is difficult to conjecture, as viewed through a telescope, they were certainly not shoots for throwing off water, but very long modillions. Could they have been brackets to support a narrow balcony? A curious difference in the laying of the stones is observable here; from above the brackets three or four stones are placed in an oblique line to the tops of the next windows, over each of which is a small square aperture; the stones in the regular horizontal courses being bevelled off to allow of their exactly abutting upon this sloping line.

At a few yards distance there is a ruined church of an early date, as is evinced by the style of the masonry, which is far inferior to that of the tower, and by the extreme smallness of the windows.

The tower of Tulloherin, which is also deserving of particular notice, is now only sixty feet high, but very probably was loftier when first erected, since the upper part is evidently of a different date from the rest of the building. For the greater part of its height the tower is built of hammered stone, a fine silicious brescia,†

* Survey of Kilkenny.

† Ibid. p. 631.

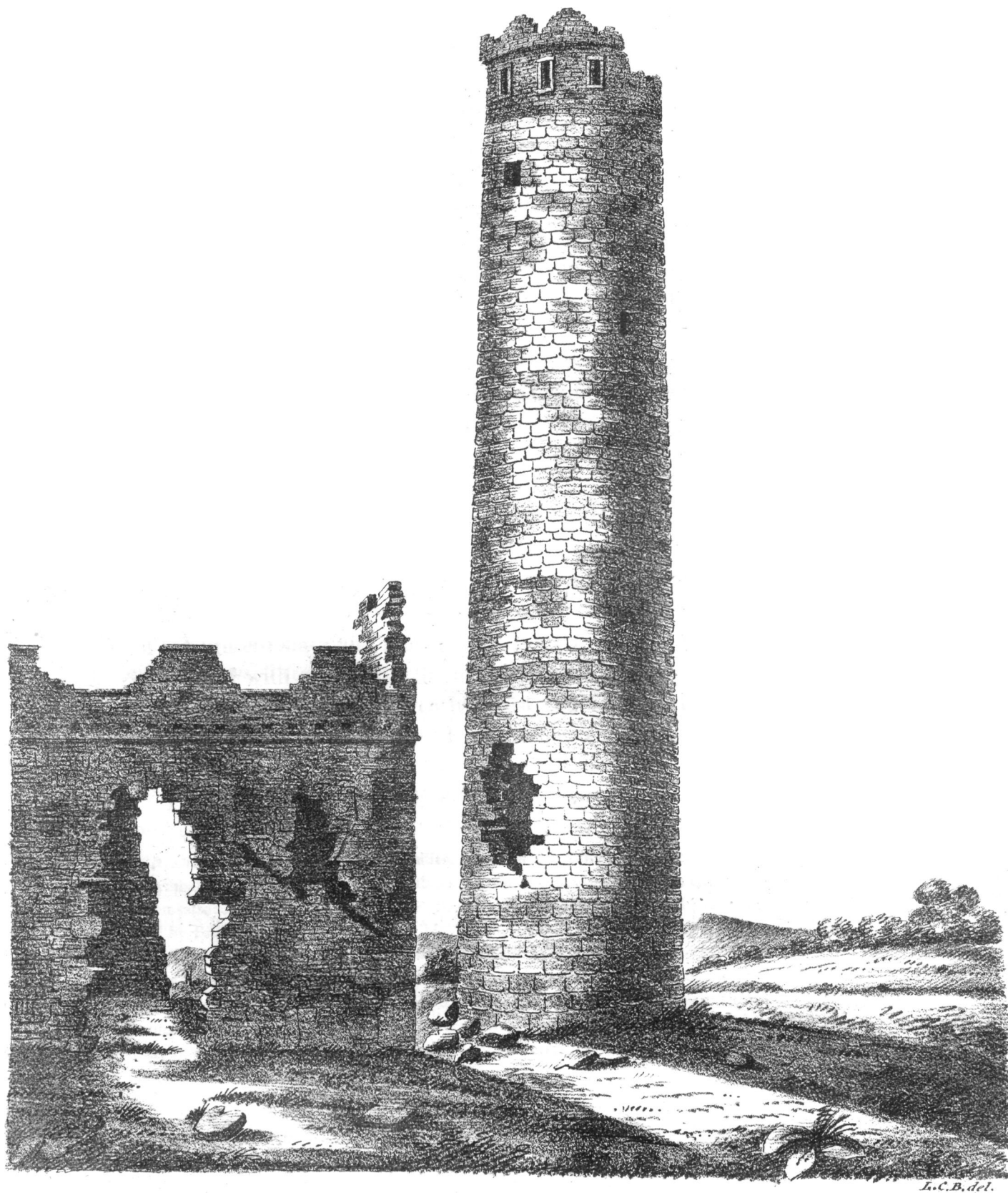
so well put together, that although the door-way has been considerably enlarged at the sides, and the arch over it destroyed, none of the wall above it has given. Each stone is, by the breaking of the wall, discovered to have been cut in a wedge shape, exactly to fit the place it occupies, and reaching quite through the wall, so that every course formed as it were a horizontal arch of great strength.

From twelve to fifteen feet of the upper part are built of the same sort of stone as the neighbouring church ; one half of this addition has fallen, but in the part that remains there are four windows, and it finishes in a slightly projecting graduated embattlement, precisely similar to that of the church, and agreeing also in the manner of building, which is in the most ancient kind of masonry ; large and small stones being most curiously intermixed, some of great weight near the top of the wall among small ones, and parts of the coins being built of slaty stones of small size. The windows are few, and so very narrow that they almost appear as if it had been intended to leave them unglazed, as it is well known some of the early stone churches in England were so left.*

The west end of this very ancient structure was raised much above the roof, and built with open arches for hanging the bell, in the same manner as that at Donoughmore.

This church is attributed to St. Kieran, about A. D. 540 ; and the size, the windows, and the masonry, agree perfectly with that early date ; but the construction of the addition on the top of the tower, coincides so precisely with that of the church, that there cannot exist a doubt of their having been built at the same period, and by the same hands ; that addition therefore proves that the tower is of a previous date, and by very different and far superior artificers.

* Britton's Antiquities, V. p. 353.



Tulloherin Tower, Kilkenny.

From the discrepancies thus found to occur among the round towers, it would appear that though in their general character they were alike, and though following a peculiar and original model they were built, *more patrio*, after the manner of the country, as Giraldus Cambrensis expresses it, yet, that there was such a variety in the modes of building, finishing, and ornamenting, as well as in the excellence of the work, as must lead to the conclusion, that the custom of building towers of this description prevailed through a considerable period of time, that they were not all built after one precise pattern, neither by one set of workmen, nor in the same age, as has been imagined.*

Nothing would tend to throw more light on this subject than a collection of designs, and accurate descriptions of all the yet existing towers, done on a scale of sufficient size to give distinctly all the details; to these views should be added an account not only of the present state and name, but of all the names and traditions connected with each.

Such a work would greatly assist the antiquary in his search for truth, which is said to dwell at the bottom of a well—the well of time.

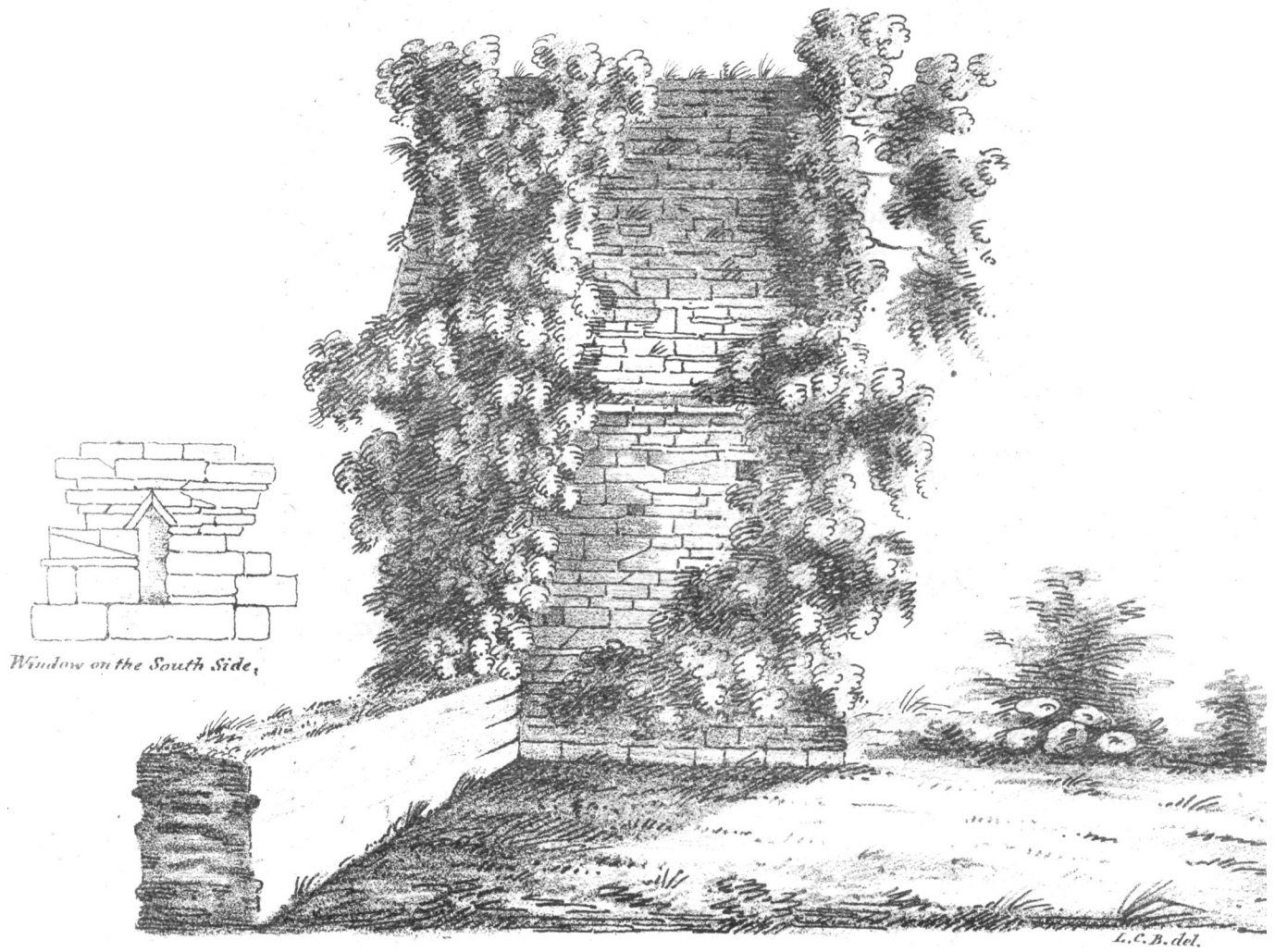
The low stone-roofed buildings, before alluded to, so greatly

* Dr. Ledwich, in his *Irish Antiquities*, supposes our towers to be contemporaneous with Grymbald's crypt at Oxford, because there are two circular towers to that church: but that has been satisfactorily proved both by Mr. Brewer in his *Beauties of Ireland* (Introduction, p. cv.) and by Britton in the fifth volume of his *Antiquities*, (p. 201) to be wholly a Norman building, and not referable to the early age in which, on the authority of a doubtful passage in Camden, it has been placed. The towers are only round turrets, forming a part of the eastern façade. The ancient cylindrical towers in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire, which Dr. Ledwich also brings forward as examples of round towers having been frequent, and always used as belfries, Mr. Brewer, who has seen both them and the Irish towers, declares to be totally dissimilar, both in construction and appearance.—Introduction, p. cviii.

resemble the fire-houses described in several parts of Persia, as almost to afford conviction that they were constructed for the same purpose; this opinion is strengthened by the circumstance of their being most frequently situated in the near neighbourhood of the round towers, and by their being invariably attributed to the earliest Irish saints, St. Declan, St. Coleman, St. Albe, &c. &c., and denominated their kitchens, their chapels, or still oftener, their *houses*.* Yet that dwelling-houses should have been built of stone for men of such lowly habits, (though with minds enlightened by acquaintance with the continent) in an age when dwellings were generally formed of wood or wattle, is by no means likely; but supposing that they had been intended for dwellings, would they not have partaken of those advantages of windows and chimnies, which may be considered as belonging to the more permanent mode of building. And if erected for chapels, still more surprising would be the want of windows, or in some of them of even the smallest loop-hole to enable the ministering priest to perform the service to the scanty congregation which they were capable of containing. It is also remarkable that in several instances small churches, apparently of very great antiquity, are situated within the same church-yard, but possessing windows, however narrow, and bearing all the characteristics of ecclesiastical buildings; had the others been chapels these would scarcely have been deemed necessary.

One of the most perfect of these stone-roofed structures, St. Columb's house at Kells, in the county of Meath, is in such a state of preservation as to be inhabited by a family. Though no longer within the church-yard, it stands at but a small distance from the

* All through the East the places of worship are termed *houses*, and particularly in Persia. The fire-house is constantly so mentioned by Ousely in his Travels in the East, by Morier, &c. &c.



Window on the South Side,

St. Columb's House,
At Kells, Co. of Meath.

church and round tower : it is about twenty feet long by sixteen feet high to the springing of the roof, which appears to be of equal height with the walls, and is of a steep wedge shape, finishing at top in a flat space three feet broad, which runs from end to end, having at the west end an open of two feet square ; the roof is built exactly in the same manner as the walls, as may be seen where the ivy has been stripped off, of stones of various sizes, the larger ones being frequently dovetailed, and in the other parts the interstices being close filled by long flat stones. This is so remarkably the case, in this building, and in the adjacent tower, which is constructed of the same sort of stone, and in the same style of workmanship, as well as in some other towers, that it suggests an idea that they may have been intended to act as bonds ; somewhat like the bond timbers of modern masonry. The mortar is of extreme hardness, and contains an uncommonly small admixture of sand.

The present entrance is at the south side, and with a portion of the wall round it is modern. Several feet above the door, and formed like those in the tower, is a narrow pointed window, the only one in the lower story. This ground-floor chamber is ceiled by a sharp arch, about twenty-five feet high in the centre, constructed of thin flat stones set on edge ; on the west end, at the crown of the arch, is an opening precisely corresponding with that in the outer roof. There has been a door at the east end, which is now built up ; at the west end also it appears as if a door or large window, at about five feet from the floor, had once been : the mat of ivy prevents the examination of the outside of the wall, but at this part it is very thick, in consequence of a projection withinside, the front of which seems to be modern, a small flat arch having been turned, forming something like a fire-place. Close to this, in the ancient wall is a very narrow door-way into a small recess contained

in the projection, in which was found, about fifty years ago, a manuscript book, written on vellum, in the old Irish character; the greater part of this book was torn and lost, but the fragments are said to exist in the library of the present Marquess of Headfort.

The space between the vaulted ceiling and the roof is just high enough for a man to stand upright, and is divided into three parts; the easternmost and largest contains at the east end St. Columb's bed, a flat stone six feet long, raised somewhat more than a foot above the floor; over this a stone having a hollow, evidently for containing something, projects from the wall; it is by the people called the saint's candlestick. Near the point of the gable there is a very small window. The centre chamber contains nothing remarkable, and that at the west end seems to have been but a passage of entrance to it; there is a little window in this gable also. A vaulted subterraneous passage has been traced from St. Columb's house to the church-yard, where the low arched entrance is to be seen; it has been filled with bones, and walled across five or six feet from the mouth.

The church-yard at Kells contains fragments of some very ancient stones, curiously carved with griffins and Irish characters, which have not as yet been decyphered. There is also shewn the smooth top of a stone, now on a level with the soil, on which devotees, on St. Columb's day, kneel and pray, turning their faces towards the tower. From this stone, tradition says Kells, or as formerly written Kenlis, derived its name. The church-warden, who is an intelligent antiquary, once, during the digging of a deep grave near it, saw this stone laid bare for eight or nine feet down; he described it as resembling an unhewn pillar, but broader at bottom than at top. The probability is, that it was a tapering pillar-stone. There is also a holy well in the vicinity consecrated by St. Columb. This assem-

blage of remains of the most ancient times and superstitions is very remarkable, and may be considered as affording confirmation of the foregoing opinions.

Most of these stone-roofed houses, as at Ardmore, contain an oblong projection, covered by a large stone slab,* which it is likely has in all cases answered as an altar: in some instances this altar bears the legendary appellation of the saint's bed, in others of his tomb.

Of these ancient fabricks some have single high wedge-shaped roofs, but the greater number, like St. Flannen's house at Killaloe, and that of St. Columba at Kells, have also the stone arched ceiling, leaving a space or low chamber between them.

Had this been a customary mode of constructing churches would there not be some traces of it at Oransay, in the Hebrides, where St. Columb made so great an establishment, or would it not have been continued in the small early churches? It would seem then that they are of earlier date than either the latter buildings, or the remains of his buildings in Iona, the great antiquity of which is however testified by many of the inscriptions being in the oldest Irish letter.†

The idea of these low stone buildings having been *Atash-Gah*, or *fire-houses*, as the Persians term them, where the sacred flame was preserved, fed with spice and incense as Lucian says were those on the altars of the Druids, gains support from the fact, that the *unextinguishable fire* was preserved with reverential care by the nuns of St. Bridget or Brighid, at Kildare, until 1220, when Henry de Loundres archbishop of Dublin, considering it as a heathen superstition, put it out. It was afterwards however re-

* Researches in Ireland, p. 163.

† Pennant's Western Tour, p. 286.

lighted, and continued to burn until the suppression of the monastery by Henry the eighth.*

Cambrensis says the fire was kept up day and night in the fire-house of Kildare, and yet the ashes never increased. His curiosity being excited by this account, Holinshed went to the place, "where," says he, "I did see such a monument, like a vault, which to this daie they call the fire-house." A part of this small stone-roofed building, which was originally twenty feet square, still remains, and is always pointed out as the fire-house of St. Bridget.

The perpetual fire was tended by vestals, in Irish called Brèochuidh, Brìoghaidh, or Brighia, that is, fire-keepers. The Brèoghaidh or Inghean an Dagha, the daughters of fire, as they were frequently styled, were often women of the highest birth, the daughters of chieftains.† St. Brigid is said to have lived in the fifth century, and that she and her nuns were the immediate successors of the Druidic vestals.‡ She is equally venerated in Scotland as in Ireland. At Abernethy her relics received extravagant homage; by her name was sworn one of their most solemn oaths; and on the evening of her festival many ceremonies of a most strange *druidical* nature were performed both there and in the Hebrides. So prized were her remains, that the Irish of Ulster would not allow that they rested at Kildare, but insisted that Down-Patrick had the honour of being her burial place; whilst the Picts zealously maintained that her bones reposed at Abernethy, which had been consecrated and made over to her by one of their kings.§

* Ware's Antiquities, II. p. 237.

† Anthologia Hibernia, III. pp. 241—321.

‡ Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland. — Grose's Antiquities of Ireland, I. p. 25.

§ Macpherson on the Antiquities of Scotland, p. 218. The Druidesses are said to have been

Her connexion with druidical superstitions, round towers, fire-houses, and perpetual fire, is too remarkable to be overlooked: it seems to make good the opinion, that she had been the chief Druidic priestess at the head of the vestals;* and that Brèoghídh, and the daughters of fire, were in subsequent ages confounded with the Brigidine nuns, of which order however there does not seem to have been any establishment in Ireland, and in England only one.†

From the foregoing statements, a well grounded conclusion may be drawn, that these low fabricks are seldom found but in connexion with the towers, and were designed for the preservation of the sacred fire; whilst the neighbouring towers were reserved for its public exhibition. In some cases the lofty tower may have served for both purposes.

It is also very possible that these fire-houses may have been used as cells by the holy men who first preached the Gospel in Ireland, with the view of doing away the sanctity attached to them as receptacles for sacred fire, and of changing the current of respectful feeling by giving it a different object; hence, the high consideration with which they were regarded, derived as it was from the union of reverence for the preacher, and traditionary veneration for the hallowed fire-

divided into three ranks. The first vowed perpetual virginity, and lived in sisterhood retired from the world. They were highly admired for their skill in divination, prophecy, and miracles.

Wood's Religion, Ancient British, p. 45.

All these qualities seem to have been embodied in St. Bridget, who was famous for her chastity and her miracles.

* Essay on the Primitive Inhabitants of Ireland, where Breghit is said to be the goddess of Science, p. 158. Bridgit is recorded to have received the veil from St. Patrick, A. D. 453.—Perhaps the then chief priestess, or Breoghídh, was converted, and being baptized, became the famous St. Bridget.—Survey of Kildare, p. 10.

† Anthologia Hibernia, III. p. 241.—Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland, p. 92.—Kildare is said to have derived its name from St. Bridget's oak, under which she delighted to sit.—The oak was the sacred tree of the Druids.

house; hence also, when more splendid edifices were reared, the preservation of so many of these otherwise insignificant buildings as undoubted proofs of the antiquity and holiness of the place.*

Much as has been written upon the ecclesiastical antiquities of Ireland, the earliest Christian remains have not yet been fully investigated; these relics of the olden time are small, and in the general but insignificant, and have therefore been too often overlooked, the evidence which they afford of the early planting of Christianity in the island not being sufficiently appreciated. These remains might assist the speculations of the historian and the antiquarian architect, by supplying a link in the architectural chain, and in this view are highly deserving of observation.

Of the innumerable churches and monasteries founded in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, but a few, and those uncertain, fragments have descended to these times; and the notices, in various authors, of these humble ruins, are so scattered and so indistinct as to render it difficult to present the subject in such a form as to afford clear information, or to offer any remarks deserving of attention.

By far the greater part of the early churches were undoubtedly constructed of wood, probably of oak planks thatched with reeds, according to the custom of the Scots, as Bede says in describing the church built at Lindisfarn in the year 635.† But there is reason to think, that though this was the mode most commonly followed, yet that some were certainly built of stone. Of these structures, although the dates of their foundations are in most instances recorded, yet of the greater number no trace of the original building remains: most of them were rebuilt by the English settlers, and

* Whitelaw's History of Dublin, I. p. 264.

† Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 22.

some few by their Irish imitators, who, though they could not bring themselves to dwell in gloomy stone castles, quickly followed their example in rebuilding, enlarging, and adorning the places of worship. Thus Duleek, founded by St. Kenan, who died A. D. 489, was a stone building, since it derives its name from the Irish words, *Dum*, a house, and *Liag*, a stone; from its receiving such an appellation it was probably one of the first stone churches erected. It was rebuilt in after times, and no part of the original fabrick at present exists.*

So also Trim abbey was founded by St. Loman in A. D. 482, and rebuilt by Hugo de Lacy in 1180.†

In the same manner Kilkenny was founded by St. Canice, who lived about the middle of the sixth century, and was rebuilt by O'Dullany, Bishop of Ossory, who laid the foundation in 1180, and consecrated the church when it was completed in 1200. There are however appearances which seem to demonstrate that the building which preceded the cathedral was of stone; for where the plaster has fallen the stones, particularly the large ones, forming the coins, are seen to be sculptured with figures and letters, remnants probably of the original building.‡

Some however of these very ancient edifices are still in existence; among them we may rank the small chapels which are attributed to some of our earliest confessors, at Lough Derg, in the Isles of Arran, in that of Innis Murry, in Cape Clear Island, at Ardmore two small churches coarsely built, but with mortar cement, and St. Molaise's

* Archdall's Monasticon.—Ware's Antiquities, chap. xxix.

† Ware's Antiquities.—Survey of Meath, ix.

‡ Dr. Shea's Account of the Cathedral of Kilkenny, p. 6.

cell in the little island of Innismore, situated in Lough Gill ; the very curiously built church of Clonatin, constructed of large blocks of red grit stone, rudely put together : this little building, thirty feet long by nineteen wide, appears to be one of the earliest ecclesiastical structures, although the door-way, formed of a blueish stone, is in the best style of Saxon, and highly ornamented with human heads and fanciful beasts.* At Fore, also, the little chapel of St. Fechin, composed of unhewn stones, and many in the county of Cork, particularly at Roscarberry. These all seem to belong to the era of our very earliest ecclesiastical remains, bearing marks of the highest antiquity, and appearing of a more remote date than any of those buildings in England which are assigned to the first ages of the Anglo-Saxons. These structures have little agreement with the Saxon in their character or details. They are formed of large rough stones of unequal size ; the windows, though round at top, are coarsely joined, and destitute alike of any neat finish or ornament ; the doors are narrow, often more so at top than at bottom, and constructed in the simplest manner, a single stone forming the lintel.

A degree of improvement may be observed in some other edifices, which yet appear but little later in date than the foregoing. At the town of Clones is a small ruined chapel, the outside of which is faced with neatly squared free-stone, well jointed, though without cement, but lined withinside with lime-stone and mortar. This little building is assigned to St. Tigernac, who died A. D. 550.†

Aghadoe church is of rude workmanship, lighted only from the east end by two of the narrowest lancet shaped windows ; but the door-way is an uncommon specimen of sculptured ornament, consisting of six different mouldings in succession, amongst them the

* Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, I. p. 388.

† Survey of Monaghan, p. 109.

chevron and the zigzag; they are beautifully executed, and still fresh and perfect.*

The church at Dungiven is remarkable for the resemblance some part of its architecture bears to the ruins in the Scottish island of Iona. The arches over the extremely narrow lancet windows of the chancel, being a kind of gothic, formed in the same primitive manner as those at Oransay, by two flat stones of equal length, their lower ends resting on the side uprights, the others meeting in the middle, and forming an acute angle. The windows are so narrow as to admit but little air, and were evidently not intended to be glazed.† The body of the church is built of cut free-stone, neatly put together; it is of a mixed character, the arch over the door-way being semicircular, as is that between the nave and the chancel. There is no ornament, but the work is most excellent. The windows in the nave are wide, of handsome stone work, and plainly of much later date than the rest of the edifice, which is said to have been built about the year 1100, by the family of the Carthans;‡ a date which agrees so well with the general style of the building that it seems deserving of some reliance. It may be observed, that if this be so, this well constructed lime and stone building was erected sixty-nine years previous to the landing of the Anglo-Normans, and is a proof of the justice of the conclusions drawn in an earlier part of this essay.

At Lusk there is a church with a belfry of peculiar character, well worthy of notice; this stands at the west end of the building, and one of its angles is attached to a lofty round tower, much higher than the bell tower or the three smaller round towers which

* Wright's Killarney, p. 72.—Weld's Killarney.

† Parochial Surveys, I. p. 301.

‡ Survey of Derry, p. 489. It is probable that when the church was enlarged, and in part rebuilt, that the nave was added by the Carthans; while the chancel may contain a portion of the original structure, and possibly belong to the latter part of the seventh century. A conclusion warranted by the strong likeness it bears to the church in Iona.

adorn the other three angles. These form a singular instance of imitation of the Irish tower, or of an endeavour to introduce it into ecclesiastical architecture. These towers, and the belfry, finish with a graduated battlement, which is frequently employed in Ireland in church buildings; they are evidently of a quite different construction from the round tower, which is finely executed, and the inner surface of its wall perfectly smooth.* The body of the church is in the early pointed style, and appears somewhat more modern than the steeple. There is here a curious monument, some of the carvings upon it partaking of a hieroglyphical character;† in this it is not singular, since at Knockmoy the tombs of the kings of Connaught have representations of this nature upon them. Dr. Ledwich also mentions a church, over the door of which a scarabæus is sculptured.‡

It is said that in some of these very ancient edifices remains of Runic inscriptions are to be found.§ These, if decyphered, might lead to satisfactory results, and might be capable of throwing much light upon the date of such fabricks. We must however observe the improbability of their being in the Runic, since it seems to have been made clear that no Runic alphabetical writing has been discovered of an earlier date than the eleventh century,|| nor is there any reason to believe that it was ever introduced into Ireland. But if they be not in Runic, nor in the ancient Irish character, can it by possibility be the Pelahvi, or ancient Persian?

Of great apparent antiquity are the venerable remains of the little church of St. Doulough's, about five miles from Dublin; this ruin

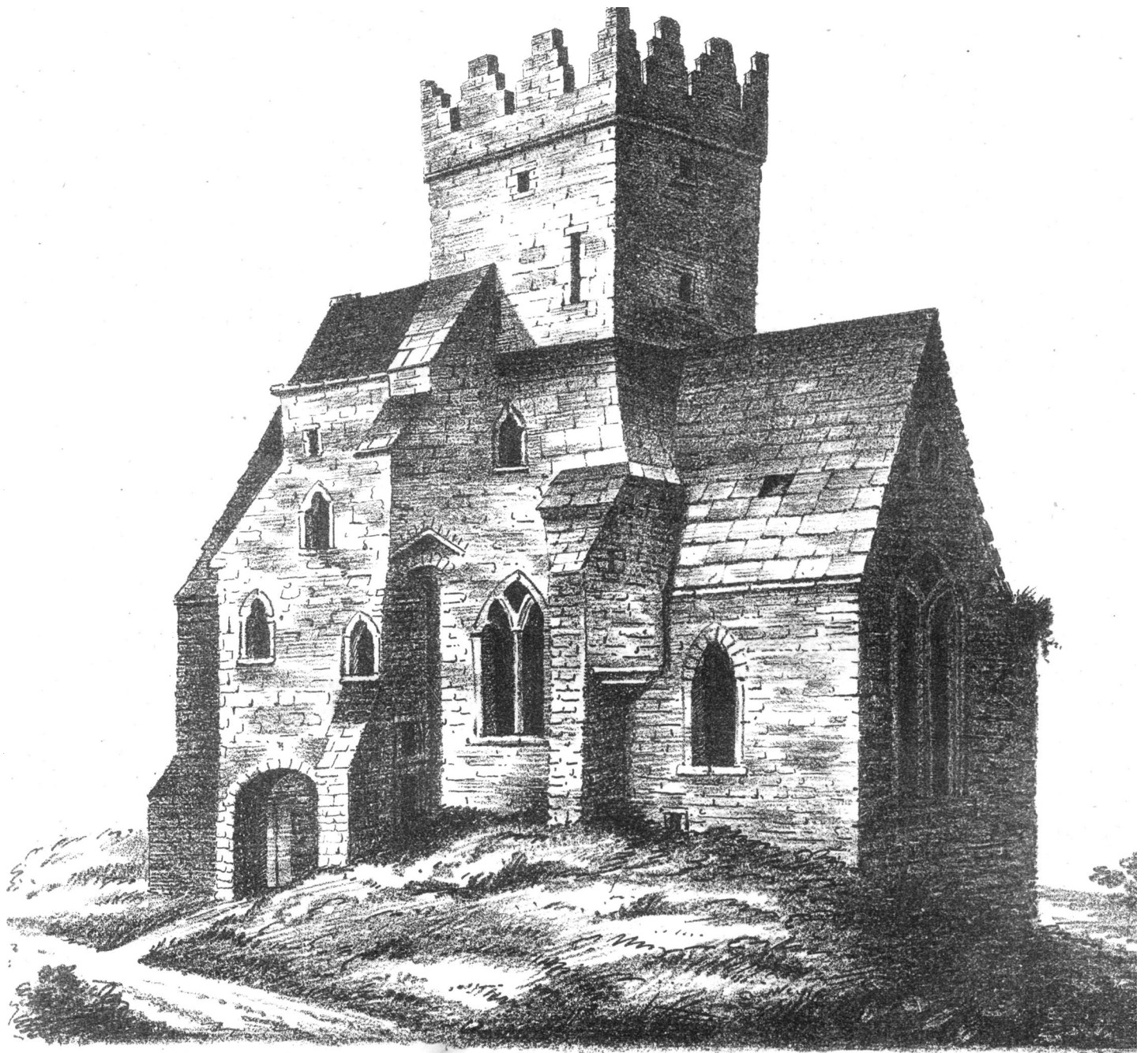
* Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, I. p. 253.

† Transactions R. I. A. II. pp. 58—67.

‡ Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland, p. 520.

§ Ibid. pp. 45—333.

|| Bosworth's Elements of Anglo-Saxon Grammar, p. 27.



L.C.B. a

Saint Doulagh's Church.
County of Dublin.

has been conceived to be a monument of Danish architecture ; if it be so, as is suggested by Mr. Brewer,* can it be supposed that a people, contented with so rude and poor a building for the sacred purpose of an oratory and a shrine for the relics of St. Olave, could have been the architects of the massy and beautifully built round towers of Ireland ? It is however certainly of a date prior to the Anglo-Norman invasion, as may be judged from the manner of building, from the absence of all these marks and embellishments, which have been satisfactorily traced from the twelfth century down, and from the stone roof ; for we have no record of any works of this nature subsequent to that period. The roof is still in good preservation, the outer part, rising in a very steep wedge shape, is covered with smooth oblong stones from nine inches to a foot long, laid close together, flat, and imbedded in cement, but never overlapping each other. In the neatness and regularity of the work it presents a quite different appearance from the wall-like roof of St. Columb's house ; there is here a great thickness of solid mason-work between the ridge of the roof and the centre of the pointed arch which forms the cieling of the upper story : this arch is of flatish irregular stones, with an uncommon quantity of mortar between them. The arch is extremely well turned, and has not given in any part : about the middle under the tower the cieling is groined. The whole length of the building is forty-eight feet by eighteen wide, which in the lower story is divided into two chambers ; that to the east appears to have been the chapel, having a mullioned window, eight feet high and three feet ten inches wide ; and on the south side another, not quite so large, which has lost all the tracery. In the walls are many small square niches or recesses, the object of which it is dif-

* Beauties of Ireland, I. p. 236.

ficult to imagine; and in the north and west sides appearances of irregular arches, which have been filled up: in the centre of that, at the west end, there has been a square-headed door; on the south side there ascends to the upper chamber a staircase two feet wide, and of a singular construction: the steps are each an irregular triangle, and placed alternately, so that two risers occupy only the breadth of one step, as usually placed; by this mode a power is gained of ascending to any given height in half the usual space. The guide pointed it out as the right and left stair-case.

There has been a partition wall, now wholly pulled down, between this stair-case, which is lighted by a large window half way up, and the chapel; at the foot of it, on the lowest step, there was a door which opened towards the stairs and against the wall, into a flat niche which just received it. Modern heads and mullions of free-stone have been added to the windows of this compartment, the side uprights of which are of a coarse grit that has suffered much injury from the weather; and it is remarkable that in all the older stone-work of the windows there is invariably a groove cut along the middle, and close to it, at intervals, small deep round holes, as if for the reception and fixture of sashes of some sort; while the more modern heads and mullions are perfectly smooth, and therefore could have been with difficulty glazed or closed in any manner. The western division is only twelve feet by nine, and contains at its east end a stone altar, six feet two inches long, by two feet five broad, which occupies so much of this small room as hardly to allow the supposition of its having been used as a chapel. Behind the altar, but not quite in the centre of it, is the square closed doorway visible in the chapel. The altar is by the country people considered as the tomb of St. Doulagh; whether tomb or altar it appears to be an addition of a later date than the building, which

would seem from the arch above the square door to have once been undivided in its whole length. Underneath this altar begins a subterraneous passage, which it is said leads to St. Doulagh's well, a beautiful clear spring in a field outside of the present church-yard; the water is contained in a circular bason, cut out of one stone, and over it is a curious octagon building, which in several points of workmanship appears to be of the same date as the church. Adjoining is a covered bath, supplied by the spring.

At the south-west corner of the smaller chamber is a narrow staircase, which leads to a small low-arched room, a sort of mezzanine, between the ground-floor and the upper chamber; this apartment, which is called the Prior's, has a window on the west, and on the south two narrow ones in a sort of small recess gained in the thickness of the wall. From this recess winding stairs lead up to the tower; and close to it is a narrow door-way to a flight of steps eighteen inches wide, which communicate with the upper chamber: this room reaches the whole length of the building; for two-thirds of its length it is of a very good height, but the floor of the remaining third rises three or four feet to give head-room for the Prior's-chamber: where this rise begins there have been broad steps. The east window of the upper story is small, that at the west end has the remains of tracery coarsely finished of a rough grit-stone, which has suffered much from the weather, but is evidently coeval with the original building:—indeed all the windows, except those of the chapel, appear to be so, since they are formed in the simplest way, half of each head, with its ill-shaped cusps, being cut out of one stone, a mode which belongs only to the very rudest age of gothic architecture. No ornament of moulding or sculpture remains in any part, but the groining and the vaulted cielings may have had a lining of cut stone, and this appears in some degree probable,

as no remnant of plaster is upon them, while some may be traced upon the walls.

Nearly in the centre of the building rises a low broad tower, which, it has been suggested,* is more modern than the church; but the mason-work appears to be precisely in the same style as the other parts, and it is supported in such a way as to shew that it must have been erected altogether: it is possible the graduated battlement may be of a later date than the body of the tower, at the same time it may be remarked, that the graduated battlement is to be found in some of the earliest churches of which we have existing ruins, that in Ireland it was frequently used in ecclesiastical buildings, whilst in England it seems to have been considered as more suited to military or castellated architecture. It however deserves to be noticed, that the whole appearance of this ancient structure bears more of a military than of an ecclesiastical character, and that it is looked upon in that light by the country people, who call it St. Doulagh's castle; very possibly it may have been built with both these views, as were some abbeys, and all the preceptories of the Knights Templars. If this building was erected by the Danes, according to common opinion, nothing is more probable than that they should have united the two objects in a country where they lived in a state of perpetual struggle and warfare.

The strength of this fabrick has been sadly tried by the raising upon the tower a most incongruous spire, which can only be considered as disfiguring the ruin. It cost two hundred pounds; but had fifty been expended in judicious repairs, this most curious building, now fast hastening to decay, might have been preserved for ages.

* Beauties of Ireland, I. p. 234.

Cormac's chapel, at Cashel, ranks next to St. Doulagh's in antiquity, and bears somewhat of the same character, but with an increase of ornament and improvement of execution indicative of a later date. It is attributed to Cormac Mc Cullenan, who was Archbishop of Cashel and King of Munster, and celebrated for his piety and learning. The Psalter of Cashel is said to have been compiled from an ancient MS. under his directions, and is highly esteemed by Irish scholars, who often refer to it as an authority: this great man was killed in battle A. D. 908,* so that if the chapel was completed by him it must have been previous to that period.

The cathedral of Cashel was built in 1198 by Donald O'Brien, and in 1419 repaired and modernised wholly in the narrow pointed style, while the chapel is altogether Saxon or Norman. Some antiquaries have judged it to belong to the interval between the death of Cormac and the building of the cathedral. But Cormac was a man of great learning, who had travelled much in foreign parts, and may have introduced improvements in style and in sculpture from the Continent, with which Ireland had always much intercourse. For we find that the same mode prevailed in Normandy, and that in the succeeding century William the Conqueror built the church of St. Nicholas at Caen, which is the latest building in this style, the date of which is accurately known. The resemblance between this church and Cormac's chapel is so strong, that it is said to be an almost "exact counterpart:" the low pillars rising only to the cornice; the arches of the intercolumniations under the windows, formed each of a single stone; the roof constructed of stone, with its steep wedge-shaped pitch: all these particulars agree so

* Ware's Antiquities, I.

exactly with those at Cormac's chapel, as to leave no doubt of its identity with the Norman style, affording strong evidence of the latter being in use in Ireland before the arrival of the English.* To the above peculiarities it may be observed, in addition, that all the arches are circular, that the columns are many of them covered with lozenge net work, that the capitals are much varied, that there are the chevron, nail-headed, billet, and dentated mouldings, besides many ornamented with human figures and fanciful animals; and that the execution of the work is quite equal to that of many Anglo-Norman buildings of a later date.†

There is also some coincidence in the arrangement and details of Cormac's chapel with those of two of the oldest churches in England; Melbourne, in Derbyshire, and St. Andrew's, Hexham, in Northumberland, which have been, on very good grounds, judged to belong to the period between A.D. 677 and 726;‡ the latter was built by Wilfrid Bishop of York, who went himself to France and procured workmen to erect the church of hewn stone after the *Roman manner*.§

The absence of side aisles, the fashion of the columns, together with the mouldings and ornaments on the capitals, all agreeing in a similarity of device, seem to confirm the idea, that Norman work-

* Turner's Tour in Normandy, II. 176. Mr. Turner indeed suggests, that the two questions so long debated, namely, the identity of Saxon and Norman architecture, and the aboriginality of stone roofs to Ireland, may be decided by an examination into the architecture of the north of Germany.

† Beauties of Ireland, Introduction, p. cxiii.

‡ Archeologia, XIII. p. 291.

§ Britton's Antiquities, V. p. 353.—Mr. Turner, in his Architectural Tour in Normandy, gives very strong reasons for the opinion, that the early Norman style was a corrupt imitation of the Roman.

men were employed in both countries before the conquest of the one or the invasion of the other.

Glandalough has been called the Palmyra of Ireland, and has been so frequently and elaborately described,* that repetition of any part would be idle; especially as no accurate date of the building of any one of the edifices remaining there can be discovered. The abbey and the whole city was in 1020 reduced by fire to a heap of ruins; soon after which catastrophe, from the style of the present remains, it may be presumed that the abbey and churches were rebuilt; since, for the most part, the masonry is good, the arches all circular, and the ornamented mouldings and capitals that remain, whether standing or among the fallen stones, are so nearly of the same fashion as those of St. Peter's at Oxford, which was certainly erected soon after the year 1000,† as to warrant its being referred to the same era.

The most remarkable differences between the early ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland and that of England, seems to lie in the following particulars. The high pitched stone roof, formed within of thin stones embedded in cement, and covered on the outside by very thin square slabs of stone. No roof of this sort exists in England.

There being no crypt or underground chamber to any of the churches built before the invasion.

In St. Doulagh's and in Cormac's chapel a low chamber, dimly lighted, occupies the space between the stone ceiling and the outer stone roof;—of this there is no instance since the landing of the English.

* In Archdall Monas. Hib.—Ledwich's Antiquities.—Whitelaw's History of Dublin.—Brewer's Beauties of Ireland.

† Britton's Antiquities, v. p. 201.

The columns and piers are of less breadth and solidity than in the British, Saxon, or Norman.

The sculpture is in much lower relief, and some of the figures are peculiar to Ireland.*

There is no instance of a church in Ireland being built with an apsis.

At the English invasion Irish architecture may be said to have ceased; the English adventurers brought with them their own fashion of building, which was afterwards copied by the Irish; hence there is little difference between the ecclesiastical edifices of England and Ireland from that period, except in the inferiority of workmanship, which (generally speaking) is the distinguishing mark of the latter.

The military architecture of Ireland in castles, strong holds, and castellated dwelling-houses, is also of English introduction, (for we have but one solitary instance, in the county of Londonderry, of any Irish building approaching to this character.) If any such previously existed, none have outlived the ages of internal warfare, mutual aggression and family revenge.

The oldest castle of strength now remaining in the kingdom is Reginald's tower at Waterford, built by the Danish leader of that name in 1003; the other defences of the Danes there and elsewhere have apparently all perished, or if any exist, they are confounded with the works of the first Norman settlers. Thus in the baronies of Forth and Bargie, in the county of Wexford, there remains a vast number of castles of various sizes, which are said to be some English and some Danish, but that the latter may always be distinguished by the superiority of the mortar, which is mixed with gravel; the

* Beauties of Ireland, Introd. cxiii.

lime, instead of being slaked with water, was ground in a quern-mill, and these two ingredients thoroughly incorporated before the mortar was made. An uncommonly large quantity of this cement was used, the stones being deeply bedded in it, and every course well grouted. This mortar is much harder than the stones it united, requiring much greater force to break it than to break them. When compared with the cement of some of the finest Anglo-Norman castles, the castle of Carrick for example, it was found to be far superior.*

The earliest British military structure is said to be the castle of Carrick, which was built by Robert Fitz-Stephen in 1170, two years before the arrival of Earl Strongbow. A square tower of this castle yet stands, and is remarkable for the great strength of its walls, the smallness of the windows, and the extreme lowness of the door.†

Hook tower, in the same county, is of great antiquity; it has been regarded as an Ostman building. There appears however much probability in a recent suggestion,‡ that the original name was Hongue tower, so called after Florence la Hongue, an Anglo-Norman knight, who came to Ireland with Henry the Second. Henry effected his landing about three miles from Hook tower, at a spot in Waterford harbour, where his entrenchments are still pointed out by the people. The tower is a circular building of great strength, which has in modern times been raised to the height of an hundred feet, and made to answer as a lighthouse.

* Parochial Surveys, III. p. 406.

† Montmorency on the Pillar Tower, p. 18.

‡ Grose's Antiquities.

§ Montmorency in Brewer's Beauties of Ireland, I. p. 371.

ERRATA IN THE FOREGOING PAPER.

Page	Line
105,	11 of Notes, <i>for</i> expressed <i>read</i> expresses.
107,	7, <i>for</i> os <i>read</i> or.
—	5 of Notes, <i>for</i> Auct. <i>read</i> Anct.
—	13, <i>for</i> Megnus <i>read</i> Magnus.
108,	20, <i>for</i> rages <i>read</i> ages.
130,	11, <i>for</i> lenthth <i>read</i> length.
136,	11, <i>for</i> became <i>read</i> become.
139, Note †,	<i>for</i> Brewster's <i>read</i> Brewer's.
149,	19, <i>for</i> Palalivi <i>read</i> Pelahvi.
157,	16, <i>for</i> means <i>read</i> seems.
160,	15, <i>insert</i> be <i>between</i> to <i>and</i> seen.
162,	17, <i>for</i> cure <i>read</i> care.
175,	7, <i>for</i> freet <i>read</i> feet.
—	19, <i>insert</i> is <i>between</i> as <i>and</i> the.
181, Note ‡,	<i>for</i> Britten <i>read</i> Britton.
187,	2 from bottom, <i>insert</i> being <i>between</i> their <i>and</i> bell towers.
—	Note, <i>for</i> Turrace <i>read</i> Turraree.
200, Note §,	<i>for</i> tumulous <i>read</i> tumulus the.
—	— <i>for</i> Bustam <i>read</i> Rustam.
201, Note †,	<i>for</i> Khorassen <i>read</i> Khorassan.
202,	19, <i>for</i> Yeza <i>read</i> Yezd.
203,	3, <i>for</i> Rinier <i>read</i> Kineer.
209,	10, <i>for</i> Chrst <i>read</i> Christ.
212,	10, <i>for</i> bullt <i>read</i> built.
237,	4, <i>for</i> Mc <i>read</i> Mac.
421,	19, <i>for</i> Hongue <i>read</i> Hougue.